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# QUEEN ANNE
## AND HER COURT

*Her Highness the Lady Ann*

*P. Lely Pinxit A. Blooteling fecit et excudit 1678.*

*Allen & Co. London, Ltd. Sc.*

*Princess Anne afterwards Queen Anne*

*From a mezzotint after the painting by Sir Peter Lely*

# QUEEN ANNE
## AND HER COURT

BY

P. F. WILLIAM RYAN

*WITH ILLUSTRATIONS*

VOL. I

LONDON: HUTCHINSON & CO.
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# ILLUSTRATIONS

## VOL. I


THE LADY ANNE. *(By Sir Peter Lely)* . *Photogravure Frontispiece*

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# Queen Anne and Her Court

## CHAPTER I

ONE of the quaintest stories in mediæval lore traces in rather wayward allegory that chapter in the lives of James, Duke of York, and Anne Hyde, which closed with the secret of their marriage being unveiled.

Young Bertram of Roussillon was a ward of the King of France, and high in the favour of His Majesty. Because of his father's death, he was summoned in early boyhood to Court, and soon its distractions effaced the memory of little Giletta, who had been his playfellow. Some years passed, and the news trickled down from the town to the country that the King was stricken with a painful illness which baffled all his physicians. An inspiration flashed upon Giletta, now an orphan. Hastening to Paris, she obtained an audience of the monarch, and so won upon him by her beauty and eloquence that her petition to be made his physician for

a brief space was granted. Employing a formula left by her learned father, she restored His Majesty to health, and then for her fee she craved the hand of Count Bertram. The Court was aghast. Was its darling to be condemned to the arms of this impudent baggage? Saint Denis and the whole calendar of saints avert it! But oaths and orisons were in vain. The King was inflexible; and with the blessing of the Church, to the chagrin of all the great ladies, Giletta became Countess of Roussillon.

Her happiness was only the beginning of her sorrows, for the Count left his bride alone in the château of Roussillon, while he wandered through Southern Italy disconsolate for his freedom. She had now to reawaken the love that was hers in childhood, before Bertram had been spoilt by Court dames. By much patience and courage, and a little guile in season, the Countess won her lord to his allegiance. With lusty twins to make the galleries of the old château ring with mirth, Bertram and Giletta lived happily ever afterwards, which is not often the way of romances that begin after marriage.

It was after marriage, too, that misfortune elevated Anne Hyde to the dignity of a heroine. Her story, like that of Giletta, ended in a manner true to poetical justice. And if there were no twins, she at least bequeathed to

England two little girls, each of whom in turn was crowned its queen. The epic upon which the curtain fell fifty years afterwards, when Queen Anne ceased to breathe, has a fitting prologue in the chain of events associated with the secret marriage of her mother, Anne Hyde, and its ultimate acknowledgment by her husband, the Duke of York.

The maids-of-honour of the Princess of Orange, sister of Charles II. and of James, Duke of York, had as comrade a young English girl, whose comely person and exuberant spirits distinguished her in a Court remarkable neither for beauty nor gaiety.

In 1656 the Princess, accompanied by her ladies, went to Paris to visit the Queen-mother, Henrietta, widow of Charles I. At his mother's house the Duke of York met the damsels from the Netherlands, and was consoled to find amongst so sedate a company his vivacious young country-woman.

The Duke was a tall and soldierly fellow in his twenty-second year. He had fought on land and sea, and, as soldier and sailor, had covered himself with glory. Turenne and Conde, the first judges of military prowess in Europe, had applauded him as one of the bravest warriors of the age. It was, therefore, a Prince who was also something of a hero who invaded the circle

of his sister's handmaidens to lay siege to the fairest and brightest of the strangers. A certain glamour, too, springing from the misfortunes of his family, enhanced the attractions of the Prince's personality, glamour all the more enchanting because the clouds were dispersing, and the omens promised that in the not very distant future the Prince of Wales would come to his own again.

The imagination of the young maid-of-honour took wings at being singled out from the other ladies for attentions so flattering. To her companions, however, this trifling was only a prince's mode of spending his furlough from the wars, and no thought of a wedding-ring crossed their minds to stimulate their jealousy of the English girl. The Queen-mother was too proud to take alarm at her son's preference for a simple attendant; and as for Anne's mistress, the Princess of Orange, if she noted James's partiality for the society of her maid, it would only be to give her a hint, acid or kindly, according to her mood, of the perils that beset a pretty girl amidst the temptations of a Court. The Queen-mother and the Princess had but one ambition—to rehabilitate the fallen fortunes of their family. The realisation of this dream of their lives depended in a great measure upon the brides chosen by Charles and James. The marriage of the Duke of York

with a lady devoid of great fortune and separated by a vast gulf from the Royal caste would naturally appear, to keener observers than either of these ladies, the readiest means of piling ruin on ruin, and of making the Stuarts, now objects of pity, the laughing-stock of the Courts of Europe.

When, the visit of the Princess of Orange having concluded, she took leave of the French capital with her suite, not all the belles of Versailles and of Fontainebleau could efface the impression made upon James by the light-hearted coquette from The Hague. While James sighed for Anne, the girl herself was not quite happy amidst the sombre gaieties of the Dutch Court. When her lover was near her she was coy. Before his advances she had retreated with the masterly generalship of an experienced campaigner in affairs of the heart. But now that she was safe from the siege pressed so ardently by her Royal lover, she sighed for the reopening of hostilities, and a renewal of those tender ambuscades and daring sorties that enliven the manœuvres of an impetuous wooer. The armistice was, however, a tantalising one for the lovers, and it was only in 1659 that the Prince was able to muster his forces for a final and triumphant assault upon the heart of the maid-of-honour.

Negotiations for the return of the Royal

Family to England were at this time in the wind. Foremost amongst those who were busy with schemes for the Restoration was Anne's father, Sir Edward Hyde. Engrossed in the affairs of the Prince of Wales, he could spare little time from his duties as Lord Chancellor to the Royal exile to attend to his family, which was residing at Breda, under the protection of the Princess of Orange.

Leaving his eldest brother and Sir Edward to maintain the interests of the Royal House at this crisis in its history, the Duke of York set out for Holland, there to set the seal upon his devotion to Anne. It was in 1659 that James espoused his sister's maid-of-honour in the romantic old town of Breda. With magical swiftness the whole political horizon changed. The Stuarts were summoned to England, and the Duke of York found himself heir-presumptive to the throne.

The return of the Royal exiles to England meant also the return of Sir Edward Hyde, still the King's Chancellor, and his family. Anne relinquished her appointment at The Hague, and joined her parents at Worcester House, her father's residence in the Strand. James made no effort to escape from his obligations, notwithstanding this sudden turn of the wheel of fortune. He once again went through the

Photo by Emery Walker, after a painting in the National Portrait Gallery by Gerard Foest

EDWARD HYDE, FIRST EARL OF CLARENDON.

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marriage ceremony with Anne, this time according to the rites of the Church of England, in her father's mansion, overlooking the Thames, plighting his troth in the small hours, while London slept.

To safeguard Anne's honour the public avowal of this union soon became an imperative duty. James and Charles were devoted to each other. But the King might be pardoned for anathematising the ill-luck that obliged him to solve a dynastic problem of extreme difficulty at a season that was singularly inopportune. There was an interview, painful and stormy, when the Duke confessed to His Majesty the nature of his contribution to the glory of the Restoration. But Charles was too indolent to nurse his anger, too cynical for anxiety. Life for him had sweeter uses than wrangling. His wrath passed quickly, and with sunny philosophy his mind was henceforth active with plans for overcoming the obstacles that stood in the way of his brother's happiness.

Himself the last man in the world to marry a woman of inferior station, Charles, in his action with regard to his brother's mésalliance, showed himself not only a man of the world but a man of character. With a tolerance which affords some clue to his real capacity for estimating the value of men and of principles, he recognised

that York had behaved as a gentleman—a foolish gentleman, perhaps, but with more of chivalry than of folly.

In this State emergency the King sent for two of his trusted friends and counsellors. The Marquis of Ormonde and the Earl of Southampton were the envoys whom he commissioned to communicate to the Chancellor the tidings of this startling alliance between Worcester House and Whitehall. The indignant father returned with Ormonde to the King. There was a violent scene in the Royal presence, with all the violence on Sir Edward Hyde's side. He railed against his daughter, begging the King to have her sent to the Tower. Her presumption was unpardonable. Not all the tortures of the executioner could sufficiently chastise her. He disowned and cast her off. She was a traitress and a hussy. Away with her. No sire of ancient Rome could have evinced more of zeal for duty and less of affection for his child.

Charles laughed politely in his sleeve. The notion of sending his brother's wife to the Tower to be decapitated at leisure was too droll. The headsman was the complement of the priest in bluff King Hal's household; but Charles, who had a pleasanter way with domestic entanglements, simply thanked the Chancellor for his

loyalty and then calmly awaited the trend of events for a chance to serve the minister's wilful daughter.

The drama which divided its scenes between the Court and Worcester House was soon the talk of the town. Anne, by her father's order, was kept a prisoner in her room. Her husband, who maintained his customary stoicism in the midst of all the excitement, regularly visited Worcester House—a fact which supported the view that Sir Edward Hyde was not nearly so enraged at the honour thrust upon his family as he would have his Royal master believe.

While ministers were debating as to the course to be followed, and Charles, with admirable spirit, was advising a frank avowal to the nation, Heaven took the management of the affair into its own hands. The King's young brother, Henry, Duke of Gloucester, a youth devotedly loved by his family, was taken suddenly ill with small-pox and died. Scarcely had he been laid to rest when the Princess of Orange, Anne's old mistress, arrived in London. The Queen-mother hastened to follow her, and the ladies of the Royal Family now assumed the ungracious task of leading the opposition to the recognition of the marriage. The Queen-mother was even more implacable than her daughter. She declared that if ever Anne should be brought

into Whitehall by one door, she should leave it by another, and never enter it again.

By way of bridging in some degree the difference of rank dividing the bride and the bridegroom, and as a sort of polite challenge to his mother and sister, Charles raised Hyde to the peerage as Baron Clarendon. His Majesty also spoke before the Court of his belief in the validity of the union, thus, as it were, cutting the bridges behind himself, and so making impossible a dishonourable retreat.

A villain of the melodramatic type appeared on the scene at this juncture in the person of Sir Charles Berkeley. Sir Charles was captain of the Duke of York's Guard, and one of His Royal Highness's boon companions. With almost incredible audacity, Berkeley confessed to the Duke that he had been the recipient of favours from Anne Hyde. He supported his statement with oaths, and brought forward the Earl of Arran, the younger Henry Jermyn, Killigrew, and Dick Talbot, as witnesses to her disreputable character. The Duke was aghast, as well he might be. He never doubted the sincerity of Berkeley, and in the bitterness of his disappointment he ceased his visits to Worcester House. The parts of the various characters in the drama were now completely inverted. The King, a more subtle judge of men than his brother,

was still poor Anne's friend. But the Duke of York, who was hitherto ready to sacrifice everything on the altar of duty while duty followed his inclinations, now thought seriously of repudiating his obligations, and of condemning his unfortunate wife to public shame.

Exquisite mental anguish made these days long and miserable beyond all words for the sorely tried prisoner at Worcester House. Besides the ignominy of being repudiated by her husband on the eve of motherhood as an abandoned Magdalen, there was the weight of her father's wrath to be endured, wrath that now was real enough. Yet still more heartrending to the hapless creature than the affliction of her own deserted plight, or the thunder on her father's brow, was the spectacle of her mother's despair at seeing the protection of the Prince withdrawn from her child at the time of her desperate need. And to fill the cup of the unhappy wife's sorrows, there was the knowledge that her reputation was being torn to tatters by the rakes of the Court and the scandal-mongers of the town. The cry that filled her heart during these wretched days might well be an echo of Gretchen's lament in "Faust":

> For him my soul doth wildly strain.
> Ah! could I but clasp him and so detain,
> Oh! could I but kiss him, and with a sigh
> Upon his kisses dissolve and die.

But for him "at the lattice her eyes grew dim," and neither Prince nor messenger came to alleviate her misery.

In the midst of this plotting and lying, death again crept into the Royal household. Yesterday it was the young Duke of Gloucester, the best loved of the Royal Family. Now the Princess of Orange was stricken down, and with tragic swiftness she followed her brother to the tomb. The Queen-mother, chastened by the lash of a double affliction, had little heart left for a quarrel, in which all the arrogance was on her side, and all the justice on the other. The King, for his part, was only too eager to see his sister-in-law exculpated, and James was the most miserable of men.

The effrontery of the ringleader of the plot to ruin a helpless girl did not desert him at finding himself without a sympathiser amongst the members of the Royal House. On his knees before the Duke of York, Berkeley confessed with mock penitence that he had falsely sworn away his wife's honour. Wonderful to relate, James did not run a sword through the courtier's black heart. Never, indeed, was there a confession of perjury more welcome. Like a man reprieved at the foot of the gallows, the Duke was too delighted to think of retribution. The King, who hated to use the iron hand, accepted

the confession of infamy with his usual *sang-froid.* The captain of the Duke of York's Guard was too gay a rascal to be banished, too amusing for so dull a theatre as the Tower, and so Charles gladly acquiesced in James's clemency.

Punishment of a kind there was meted out to Berkeley. But it was of the poetical order, and doubtless contributed much in later days to his amusement and to that of his associates. Diverting as they may have found it, however, it was an atonement that nevertheless had its sublime phase, for it was linked with a formal and dramatic vindication of the woman they had so treacherously maligned.

While the network of intrigue was being slowly unravelled Anne had given birth to a baby boy. In her travail a bishop and a bevy of ladies subjected her to a searching cross-examination concerning the paternity of her child. The noble ladies listened with straining ears while the bishop abjured Anne to confess the whole truth. But the truth they already knew. There was nothing to confess. This star-chamber Court, in which Anne's life and her child's trembled in the balance, was, it seems, ordered by the King who, in doing so, manifested his usual shrewdness. Charles knew that the men who had assailed the mother's reputation

would be capable of asserting that her babe was an impostor. He therefore employed what looked like a barbarous inquisition, to secure unimpeachable testimony concerning the birth of a child who would stand in the direct line of succession to the crown.

The ceremonious act of reparation enjoined upon the conspirators was performed when Anne was convalescent. The lady's father relates that Berkeley was summoned to Worcester House, and he was, it would seem, accompanied by his comrades in infamy. Never, most assuredly, ought conscienceless dare-devils to have crossed a threshold more unwillingly. If one spark of true manhood flickered in their hearts they would have died before facing a daughter of this house. But Restoration gallants did not die of shame. Chivalry was worse than dead—it was a laughing-stock.

What would one not give for a canvas perpetuating that moment, quick with a thousand surging emotions, when these men were ushered into the presence of their victim, with the Duke of York at her side, stern and proud! History furnishes no parallel to that scene. The allegory of Bertram and Giletta fails us here. But one can picture the Prince glancing along the line of his quondam friends—Berkeley, Arran, Killigrew, Talbot, the captain with front of

brass, his lieutenants skulking at their worthy chieftain's heels, hangdog and sullen. Four words spoken by the Duke were the signal for the crowning act of expiation. They were those in which he proclaimed the lady at his side:

". . . The Duchess of York!"

As the Prince pronounced his wife's title the penitents fell upon their knees, and she, faint and trembling from physical weakness, gave her hand to be kissed in turn by each of the slanderers.

It was their absolution and dismissal. Ever afterwards it was the business of Anne's life to forget that she had passed through such a novitiate of suffering.

With simple dignity the maid-of-honour played her new part of princess as though to the manner born. Her influence over the Duke of York was the strongest that ever bridled his proud and obstinate temperament. The only weakness of his that she was powerless either to correct, or to protect him from, was the disastrous fascination of his mistresses. In 1671 the Duchess passed away.

On the day of Anne Hyde's death the evil star of James of York was in the ascendant. The homely sense, the genial wit, the broad human sympathies that distinguished her character were qualities so dear to Shakespeare's

countrymen, that they might have redeemed the follies of a despot and saved his crown. But now it was Giletta's turn to depart, only her flight was for ever, and Bertram's loss beyond repair.

The little prince, around whose birth had raged the tempest of passion which has been described, was destined to only a few months of life. On February 6, 1664, a girl was born to the York household, who was christened Anne, after her mother. The Royal nursery was not empty when Anne arrived. Mary was already there, a bright little creature a couple of years old. Later, a boy, Edgar, and a girl, Catherine, were born; but Mary and Anne were the only children of the first Duchess of York who became personages in history. Mary has only a minor interest for us, because, in marrying a man of great parts and weaknesses planned on a proportionate scale, her personality was completely overshadowed. Mary is merged in William.

Not so Anne. With feebler gifts than were her sister's portion, with a husband who would have been more happily placed as a simple trooper than as prince-consort, she, nevertheless, not only helped to create a revolution in the government of England, but by her very irresolution succeeded in perpetuating its con-

From a photo by Emery Walker, after the picture by Sir Peter Lely in the National Portrait Gallery

ANNE HYDE, DUCHESS OF YORK.

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sequences. She, in a special manner, was the priestess who presided over the tragedy of which the victims were those bound to her by the nearest and dearest ties. But, strange irony of fate! Amazing mystery of psychology! This princess, whom nobody ever dreams of as possessing a trait in common with the Isabellas, the Elizabeths, the Catherines of history, this princess, so mediocre, sacrificed every tie to ambition from girlhood onwards, intriguing, deceiving, flattering, betraying—an actress to her finger-tips—all for the gilded mockery of a leaden crown.

## CHAPTER II

WHEN, fair and inviting, all obstacles to possession having vanished, the throne at last rose before Anne of York, she began to weigh up her qualifications for the sceptre. The process of introspection was sadly unsatisfactory. Her Highness found herself wanting, and after the immemorial tradition of the greedy office-seeker, she then thought of equipping herself for the exalted place which she had first of all made sure of securing. With this object she took up the study of history. Anne the matron as a student was a spectacle to win the smiles of gods and men, so absurdly unsuited to the part was she by reason of her training and her tastes. It was not the weight of learning that was to bow poor Anne's head, and hurry her to an early grave. A pack of cards was the tome dearest to her ; and if she burnt midnight oil, it was in her enthusiasm for a lively rubber with scholars who had graduated in the same school, and valued more a decisive ace or a knave that stemmed the tide

of misfortune than all the masterpieces of *belles lettres*.

Censure, however, must not be meted out to Anne for what was only in a minor degree her fault. The daughters of the Duke of York were the playthings of a hundred adverse influences. They belonged neither to their father nor to the State. Their position was a sort of compromise between both, in deference to which their intellects were warped and their natural affections twisted and perverted. Secular knowledge was filtered for them, that it might be purified into harmony with the politics they were permitted to absorb, and religion itself hardly escaped the same disastrous process. Only minds extraordinarily endowed could have shaken off the effects of such upbringing, and performed for themselves in maturer years the repugnant task of revising precepts, analysing doctrines, and reconstructing standards inculcated in childhood.

The education of Anne was confided to a clergyman named Lake, with Lady Frances Villiers as governess. Lake drilled his pupil with unflagging ardour, until she was on terms of easy familiarity with the Thirty-nine Articles and their main theological buttresses. But alas for Lake's labours! The conscience, at once right and sensitive, which a religious training

is supposed to foster, never gave the least hint of its existence in Anne during that period of her life which supplied a unique moral test at the expense of her unfortunate father.

The position of Lady Frances Villiers towards the children was more that of mother than of governess. The Villiers family was one of those houses which, spreading its branches far and wide, monopolised, in all directions, posts of influence and profit. The Dukes of Buckingham were the heads of the family to which Sir Edward Villiers, the husband of Lady Frances Villiers, belonged. For his loyalty and courage in the Civil War he had received a lease of the manor and Royal house of Richmond. And thither the little Princesses of York were taken when their mother died.

The mischievous elves who weave black skeins into the web of destiny had rare sport at the old manor house at Richmond, when thither came the young ladies of York. Their companions were the seven Villiers children, of whom Edward, Elizabeth, and Anne, were destined to play important parts at the English Court. Here, too, came Sarah Jennings to play, and to lay the foundations of that ascendency over the younger princess which was to harden in time into tyranny that was almost as enduring as the victim's life. Elizabeth Villiers was the

great friend and confidante of Mary of York. It was a friendship that begot mournful fruit for Mary. Elizabeth presents a yet more sinister figure in history than that of the masterful Sarah. She became the lover of Mary's husband, the ruler of the ruler of England and the Netherlands.

Anne of York was emancipated towards the end of her life from Sarah's thraldom, but her sister was fated never to escape from the ignominy of which the friend of her childhood was the ruthless instrument. Mounting the ladder of shame, she obtained a coronet as Countess of Orkney, while her handsome brother, Edward Villiers, became an ornament of the peerage as Earl of Jersey. The broad avenue of dishonour as a short cut to distinction was not unfamiliar to the race that produced George Villiers, most unscrupulous of gallants, and Barbara Villiers, one of the most notorious, as she was perhaps the loveliest, of the profligates of the Restoration Court.

Little Edgar of York was, of course, one of the group who shared in the sports and studies and companionship of Richmond Palace. But only for a little time. With the death of Edgar the prospects of his two sisters, Mary and Anne, underwent a complete change, and that vast network of intrigue began which, characterised

by every form of duplicity, only ended with the close of the Stuart dynasty.

The Duke of York, besides being an able captain and a successful administrator, was a man of many accomplishments, acquired by association with the most polished society of Western Europe. He would naturally desire that his daughters should acquire those graces which distinguished the Royal ladies of France and Italy. In the Princess Anne's case there was, however, a serious obstacle to the Duke's ambitions. She was a lively young creature, plump and rosy, and full of animal spirits, but from an early age she had suffered from an affection of the eyes. The ailment, though not a very serious one, baffled the London physicians. The child was next taken to France, and Paris oculists may, it is thought, have been consulted ; but the trouble did not pass.

Her visit to the French capital is memorable only because Anne, for the first and last time, had an opportunity of meeting Louis XIV., who, when a boy of four, had ascended the throne of France, and who at this time, in the prime of early manhood, was absorbed in the most splendid schemes for the aggrandisement of his country. Anne's hostess in Paris would be her aunt, the ill-fated Duchess of Orleans, whose name scandal linked with that

of the Count de Guiche, and whose death rumour ascribed to a potion, administered by orders of her husband. Had Louis been anything of a seer, his prophetic soul would have shown him the dainty little guest of the Orleans household grown to womanhood, assuming the crown and sceptre of Great Britain, and as one of her first regal acts declaring war against his august self.

One day a little bird flew into the old manor house at Richmond and there whispered something that set the ears of the Princesses of York tingling and their pulses throbbing with novel doubts and apprehensions: the word that the little bird whispered was "Stepmother." In royal affairs domestic happiness has to give way to political exigencies. The future of the little girls, left so early without a mother, was the least important factor in the train of negotiations now opened with the design of finding a second wife acceptable to a gentleman of easy morals, with all the captiousness of a connoisseur in female charms, and none of a real lover's enthusiasm.

When the negotiations had been brought to a conclusion, and James had found a bride to his fancy, a wholly charming figure was introduced into the drama of the downfall of the Stuarts, and one whose nobility and innocence

imparted some touch of true regal dignity and pathos to her husband's misfortunes.

The King, for reasons of his own, was anxious that James should marry again. His own marriage was so disappointing to the nation that suggestions for a divorce from Catherine of Bragança were made to His Majesty. Charles scouted this infamous proposal. But without a male heir to ensure the direct line of succession, the throne was at the mercy of every intriguer with the wit and enterprise to play upon the anxieties of the nation. This, however, was not the only reason why the King desired the marriage of the Duke. According to all the canons of wisdom, James had made a fool of himself once. His union with Anne Hyde was a blunder which had turned out trumps, but the thanks belonged to Providence, whence miracles could not be regularly expected on behalf of one prone to fall before the least tempting shrines of Venus.

Any lady with the good luck to attract this impressionable widower, and the good sense, or virtue, or cunning, to repel him, might rest assured of the offer of his hand. In self-defence, therefore, the King decreed that York should again enter the holy state, and the Prince, most loyal of subjects, stipulating only that his tastes should be consulted, yielded acquiescence.

Many princesses were honoured by having their qualifications considered by the Royal match-makers, amongst them two ladies of the ancient house of Este, and Maryanne of Würtemberg, whose father was killed in the wars, and who was at the time in a convent in Paris.

Henry, Earl of Peterborough, was commissioned to inspect the eligible damsels and advise the fastidious swain pining for ideal companionship. This delicate mission did not pass off without a most farcical *faux pas*, but, as in every farce, there was one character who did not laugh, and in this instance it was Maryanne of Würtemberg.

Peterborough was in Germany in the course of his delicate pilgrimage, when he received orders to post to Paris, there to interview Maryanne, and if report spoke truly of her beauty and graces, to lay the Prince's heart at her feet. While the noble Earl was on the road the Duke revised his plans, but a messenger, sent to intercept him, missed the ambassador.

In Paris, Peterborough hastened to the convent where Maryanne was spending her period of mourning. The vicarious suitor was deeply touched by the singular beauty and sweetness of the orphan Princess. With more than diplomatic suavity he opened his mission and, conquered

by her naïveté, begged her hand for his Prince. The ingenuous delight of the desolate maid at the prospect of becoming a great English lady completed the conquest of the nobleman, who returned to his hotel to send home a glowing account of his achievement! But alas for poor Maryanne's hopes of happiness! One breath of icy realism dispelled them all. Back again went Peterborough to the convent. This time the lovely face did not beam with joy. And the Earl, having executed, as tactfully as might be, a ridiculous right-about-face, retired with a heart nearly as heavy as that which the young Princess bravely tried to mask with a smile, sadder than tears could be.

Away to Modena with Peterborough, where a girl of fifteen, one of the most charming and most highly educated princesses in Europe, was to be chosen as stepmother to the young ladies of York. There were two Princesses of Este, Mary Beatrice and her Aunt Eleanor. The Duke of York, with the perversity so characteristic of him, chose Mary Beatrice in preference to Eleanor, a woman of thirty, who, with her superior knowledge of the world, would have been better fitted to act as guardian to the Duke's daughters and counsellor to their father, if she could not be his keeper in the path of matrimonial rectitude. But James would have

a mere slip of a girl for a bride, or none at all. Mary Beatrice's ambition was not, however, for worldly honours, but for the austere quietude of a convent cell. It required a great deal of persuasion to induce her to accept the English Prince; and the marriage having been celebrated by proxy, the Earl of Peterborough set out for England with the child-duchess.

The bride was a *protégée* of Louis XIV., and on reaching Paris she was laden with magnificent gifts by the French king. She had need of such encouragement, for before she resumed her journey to the coast she heard of the fierce hostility which, on account of her faith, had been aroused against her in England.

The beautiful young Italian's gaiety deserted her in these days, as well it might. More like a State captive than a bride, she embarked for England. At Dover she was met by her bridegroom. He was no longer the débonnaire youth who had played havoc with the hearts of the Dutch maids-of-honour, but a stern and serious man of forty, whose countenance bore the unattractive impress left by years of political anxiety and free living. With limbs that almost failed her, she tottered to the arms of her lord. Her heart sank low at that first embrace; and could the impulse of her bursting heart have freed her from her bonds, and obliterated the

funereal pageantry of recent days, how gratefully would she have awakened in her home at Modena, a happy, irresponsible girl once more, with ambition soaring no higher than a stall in the choir of a neighbouring convent! But now, alas! there was no going back. Italy, cloudless and fair, was far away, and England, cold and grey and in all things uncertain, was beneath her feet.

The bridal procession made its way from the coast to Gravesend, and thence up the Thames, with mediæval pomp, to Whitehall. From the State barge the Duke handed to the King his bride, who now, with childish grace, made her entry into English Court life—another Imogen, blindfold and innocent, garlanded for lifelong martyrdom.

## CHAPTER III

LORD BELLGUARD in "Sir Courtly Nice," a popular comedy of the later Stuart epoch, by John Crowne, discussing love and women with his sister Leonara, clinches the debate with the couplet :

> Women, like china, should be kept with care,
> One flaw debases her to common ware.

The wisdom thus epitomised by his lordship and inculcated by the universal licence of the day, often found its most fervent disciples in fathers, husbands, and brothers, who, though not patterns of morality themselves, were zealous in offering up their kinswomen on the altar of virtue. Amongst experienced rakes the Duke of York should be awarded a place. But less painfully solicitous than many of his class for the honour of his daughters, they were not always treasured like the daintiest porcelain. It is not surprising, therefore, if in their maturity the vulgar qualities of common ware were occasionally more conspicuous than the graces becoming the purple.

The King, to whom amusement was the supreme care of State, ordered in 1674 the production of a masque; and braving it gaily as leading actresses in a drama consecrated to the cult of Venus, we find the two young ladies of York. In later years James of York was to make an earnest bid for saintship. But as yet he was far indeed from establishing his title to the halo of the blessed! And so we find him permitting his two little girls to encounter the perils of the Court festivities to which we are now to be introduced. Yet another treasure of the York household, porcelain, in truth, of the rarest excellence and beauty, was presented to the Court on this occasion. This gem, amongst a company of matchless rogues, was Mary of Modena; but the advantage was hers that, new to the country and language, she could only dimly comprehend the drift of the poetry which, by the distinguished profligates around her, was followed with keen delight.

The masque was a regular form of entertainment during the earlier Stuart epoch, not only at Court, but at the houses of the great nobles. The performances were at times marked by little of the decorum one would associate with cultivated society, even in the seventeenth century, both ladies and gentlemen seeking a remedy for stage-fright and the necessary fuel

for enthusiasm in the wine-cup. What may have been a happy handmaiden of art when the evening was beginning, provoked, as the hours wore on, scenes at which the sober and stern might feel disgust, if any sober and stern there were. The art of the masque decayed amidst the political storms that led up to the stern discipline of the Civil War; and under the lugubrious rule of the saints it withered and died for ever.

Charles II. would revive the art, and the dramatist chosen for this new restoration was John Crowne. Dryden, as Poet Laureate, might have expected the honour of the commission; but Wilmott, Earl of Rochester, took the opportunity of paying off a grudge against the more eminent man by diverting the honour to Crowne, who may well have received with misgivings this mark of noble consideration. Dryden accepted the slight with complacency. If he was to be snubbed, there was balm in the selection of his amiable friend Crowne, whose talents were agreeably buoyant when weighed in the balance against his own estimate of himself.

An element of playful malice may also have entered into Dryden's spirit of resignation. Court society was distasteful to Crowne, who was rather retiring than self-seeking, and whose sensitive nature must have paid for the boisterous

patronage of Wilmott with moments of acute distress. Still more embarrassing to the dramatist than the condescension of his patron was the haste in which the composition was required, only a month being available for its execution. Failure would have made him a target for the lampoons of envious fellow-craftsmen and the wits of the town, a prospect that was but a poor spur to inspiration. The Muses, however, smiled on Crowne. When the month had passed, and the last finishing touch had been given it, the masque betrayed no hint of strain, none of midnight oil. A masterpiece it was not; but it reflected, indeed, something of the serene humour and easy grace of the Pagan classic which had inspired it.

Crowne's complete success, under conditions so unpropitious, can hardly have been anticipated by Dryden, who was wont to applaud his friend's efforts with gusto only when the public turned upon him the cold shoulder.

Revenge was, however, around the corner, in waiting to appease the wound inflicted upon the vanity of the Poet Laureate by the double-edged sword of Wilmott's enmity and Crowne's triumph.

Rochester in a little while quarrelled with his *protégé*, whom he dubbed "Starchy John," in allusion to the spinster-like primness of his

attire. The nickname might pass for a joke, and was relished as such by those who were amused by the unchangeable spirit of reverence with which John adjusted his cravat as he had ever and always adjusted it. But the noble rake followed this hit up with an effort to set the town laughing at a metaphor in which the poet had offended his sensitive ear by allowing "sportive waves" to smile upon the sun. Rochester launched into rhyme with the sneer:

> Waves smiling on the sun! I'm sure that's new,
> And 'twas well thought on, give the devil his due.

The devil did, in all truth, have his due in the masque. The subject was in the worst possible taste. It was Ovid's fable of Jupiter's love for Calisto, the daughter of Lycaon, king of Arcadia. Jupiter, to accomplish his wishes, assumed the form of Diana, of whom Calisto was a favourite attendant. The sequel to the god's adventures was the birth of a child, Arcos, whom the mother hid in the woods. Juno, furious with jealousy on discovering the secret, changed the victim of her husband's imposture into a bear, to which Jupiter retorted in god-like fashion by making the bear a constellation.

To shock Whitehall was impossible. To amuse it was imperative. In deference therefore to the Gallic zest for entertainment which

possessed the Court, rather than from regard for the extinct proprieties, Ovid was modified for the masque. Crowne introduced Mercury, whom he made to fall in love with one of Diana's attendants, Psecas, an envious nymph who assists Juno to be avenged. The part of Nyphe, friend to Calisto, was created to provide a place for the Princess Anne, while that of Arcos, which, however amusing to the Merrie Monarch, would have been an occasion of some embarrassment to her more precocious sister, was eliminated.

Mrs. Betterton, the great Lady Macbeth of her time, was teacher of elocution to the Royal children. Both girls would probably have done better at Drury Lane than as Queens-regnant. Anne, especially, had qualities which every great actress must possess, of which the most charming was a voice of singular purity and sweetness. The throne was in some degree the reward of her signal ability to play a part—too often an ignoble one. It was therefore with a certain cynical appropriateness that, when she had reached the summit of her ambition, she settled a pension on the estimable lady who had been of old her theatrical professor.

The caste of the masque has for the reader of to-day all the charm of an old ball-programme, which, faintly fragrant with lavender, is dis-

covered by some grandson in an antique cabinet, the sanctuary of the secrets of a past generation —the generation when his gran'dame was a dainty maid. That programme, yellowed with age, faintly outlines a tale already told in real life, the tale of many a family. There are the initials of the grandsire, and there, and there, showing the dances that rewarded his eager suit. It was perhaps in the first stately minuet he lost his heart. It was perhaps while threading the last he whispered to his partner of his loss, and while her hand trembled in his he likewise lost his head with delight, and spoiled the figure. Of course, grandfather was the prize amongst the beaux, and his partner the belle of the evening. That was a pious tradition of the house. But other ladies, too, were belles that evening, and amongst the beaux there were other prizes. And other hearts were given away in the mazes of the minuet. Here are initials that tell of a homely, happy story—births, deaths, and marriages, all in honourable routine. But there are others, for one who knows, that recall some gay Lothario, gay no more, and the gentle hearts he broke, as often told by the fireside of a winter's evening. And studying that relic of the past, the antique cabinet fades away, and the whole radiant company of the olden ballroom glide upon the scene to

charm the imagination that now can trace upon every brow the handwriting of Destiny—Destiny long since accomplished.

Mild is the romance of our mildewed programme when compared with that enshrined in the caste of the Royal masque, in which the two little ladies who were to be Queens of England won the smiles of the Court. They had amongst their companions nymphs drawn from the fairest daughters of the nobility, and a brave array of gentlemen to join the nymphs in their dances. But on the programme with which King, and York, and courtiers toyed that evening, the leading characters were :

| | |
|---|---|
| Calisto, loved by Jupiter . | Her Highness the Lady Mary. |
| Nyphe, a nymph . . | Her Highness the Lady Anne. |
| Jupiter, in love with Calisto | Lady Henrietta Wentworth. |
| Juno . . . . | The Countess of Sussex. |
| Psecas, an envious nymph . | The Lady Mary Mordaunt. |
| Diana, Goddess of Chastity | Margaret Blague. |
| Mercury, in love with Psecas | Sarah Jennings. |

Eyes brighter than the wearers' diamonds, flaming to the reflection of a thousand lights, sparkled and shone when the curtain rose in the theatre at Whitehall upon "Calisto, or the Chaste Nymph." It was a tournament of beauty, with brilliancy warring on brilliancy, and lustre surpassing itself to dim lustre, for the prize of a smile, or a murmured word of

flattery. The Court for that one night was a sensual heaven, dazzling in the glory of its fallen angels, and of those younger beauties, novices as yet in the wiles of coquetry, which were the fatal passport to the Royal favour.

The men who were making history, and dissipating fortunes, and honour, and happiness, were all there. In the centre of the Royal circle, his swarthy face aglow with delight, was the Prince of the Revels, Charles himself. There, too, was the Queen, her dark, imperious features disciplined in a merciless school to endure every mortification that could lacerate a woman's soul. Close by was the Duke of York, glorying in the beauty of his child-wife, whose lustrous eyes, sparkling with rapture, filled the ladies with resentment, and ravished the hearts of the inflammable young gallants, who hungered for one flashing glance from the smouldering fire in their limpid depths. Here there were ears for but one language, and applause for but one art—the language of love, the art of gallantry.

On every hand there were brave soldiers; but here they were esteemed, not because of the laurels won in the field, but because of the hearts they had broken, or the hearts they were likely to break. The very atmosphere was intoxicating, as though charged with some

voluptuous essence, distilled by Mephistopheles in the mood in which he makes woman irresistible and her lover resistless. It was an audience which, against all its scarlet sins, could plead but one redeeming trait. It could not be dull if it would, and every sally evoked its meed of silvery laughter from the fairest throats in Europe.

In the midst of those revels, remote indeed from the shadows of mourning, fate was weaving a shroud for the handsomest young rake of the Court, whose love was to be the undoing of the fair and spirited maid who for that night was the star of Whitehall.

The peerless gallant, gayest of the gay, was the King's son, the Duke of Monmouth, then only in his twenty-fifth year, who, carrying himself with grace, carelessly superb, made Lady Henrietta Wentworth his slave beyond all hope of redemption.

Enriched by the gods with every gift that the kindest of fairy princesses could lavish on her favourite—wealth, beauty, rank, high courage, the love of devoted friends — this hapless girl squandered all on one who boasted every charm, and lacked every virtue which could reward a woman's trust.

Of the seven ladies cast for the masque, Lady Henrietta and Sarah Jennings had to don male

From a photo by Emery Walker, after the picture by William Wissing in the National Portrait Gallery

JAMES SCOTT, DUKE OF MONMOUTH, K.G.

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attire. With the abandonment of overflowing spirits, Lady Henrietta threw herself into the part of the jovial god bound on amorous adventure. Reckless was she of her heavenly spouse's jealousy; and with infectious humour, strangely bold on the lips of a seventeen-year-old damsel, she dared the angry Juno to do her worst, and then chided her for having done it. The *blasé* company laughing around Charles must have been enchanted at such sentiments from one so young and so inexperienced, declaimed with lively appreciation of their Olympian drollery. But one laugh at least should have rung hollow at those moments, when Jupiter pressed hot in pursuit of the child Calisto. The Duke of York's feelings must have been strangely blunted if he could have heard without some doubts and heart-searchings this Jupiter of seventeen apostrophising Pleasure personified in the alluring person of his child, the sleeping Calisto.

Never was there so engaging an apostle of unrestrained voluptuousness as this enchanting Jupiter, who achieved a conquest that made her the envy of the Court in winning the heart of the King's son. A word-picture which conjures up a vision of an irresistible Adonis has been handed down by Grammont, who knew Monmouth in his all-conquering youth:

"His figure and the extraordinary grace of his person were such that Nature never carved anything so complete. His face was extremely handsome, yet it was a manly face. It was neither inanimate nor effeminate, each feature having its own peculiar beauty and delicacy. He had a wonderful genius for every sort of sport and exercise, an engaging aspect, and an air of grandeur. In a word, he possessed every personal advantage. But in proportion to the greatness of his personal, was the deficiency of his mental accomplishments. He had no opinions but such as he derived from others; and those who insinuated themselves into his friendship took care to inspire him with none but such as were pernicious. The astonishing beauty of his outward form excited universal admiration. Those who before were looked upon as handsome were now forgotten at Court. All the beautiful and gay of the fair sex were at his devotion. He was particularly loved by the King, but the terror of husbands and lovers."

Where all the beautiful and gay amongst the fair were at the devotion of this youth, whom Nature, in a riot of generosity, had moulded into a king amongst men, no wonder Henrietta, with all the infallible sapience of her seventeen years, bowed her proud neck to his yoke.

From a mezzotint engraving after the painting by Sir Godfrey Kneller

LADY HENRIETTA WENTWORTH.

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Neither the prayers of those who loved her, nor their stratagems, could wean her from her infatuation. Monmouth had been married by orders of the King, when he was only a boy of fourteen, to the Countess of Buccleuch, the child-heiress to £10,000 a year. But that he was another woman's husband was no deterrent to the passion of a girl who was in no wise superior to an age which regarded every sin as an added attraction in a woman, and in a man an extra cachet of distinction.

Her mother took her away from Court, foreseeing from this influence the wreck of her daughter's life. But the magnetism of Monmouth was stronger than the mother, stronger indeed than the child. The Earl of Thanet loved the perverse beauty, and laid his heart at her feet; but she preferred to squander the treasure of her affection upon the Royal prodigal. Perhaps she thought the day would come when the son of Lucy Walters, who already plumed himself amongst a clique as Prince of Wales, should mount the throne of England. Hugging this illusion to her soul, dreaming Heaven alone knows what vain dreams of a diadem, she gave all she had to give—her fortune and her life. Like a prince of melodrama her lover stumbled blindly to the scaffold, and Henrietta Wentworth, baroness

in her own right, went down to her grave with a broken heart at the age of twenty-nine.

The lily in the gallery of sinners was the chaste Diana herself, impersonated by Margaret Blague, a maid-of-honour to the Queen. Margaret was dismayed at being cast for the part. Her unsaintly comrades laughed; but to this girl, as good as she was lovely, it was no laughing matter to play at being the goddess who "had patronised Endymion and had not repulsed Hypolitus." So desperate was her desire to escape from the unwelcome honour, that she resigned her place in the Queen's suite. As, however, there was some delay in paying to her the usual honorarium given to maids-of-honour on their retirement, the girl tempered the more angelic virtues with worldly prudence, and donned the robes and jewels deemed becoming to a Court Diana. Everybody knew that Margaret appeared on the stage unwillingly, and persiflage did not spare so fair a theme for mirth.

But while banter and repartee sparkled in the green-room, and the audience exchanged meaningful glances at the amazing innuendos of the masque, Margaret was enduring agony. Evelyn's record of that December night affords an intimate glimpse into her emotions. Her poignant distress is the most eloquent evidence

left us of the diablerie of these effervescing hours: "During the time the performance was proceeding and her presence was not required, she returned," writes Evelyn, "to the tireing roome, where several ladyes, her companions, were railing with the gallants, trifleingly enough, until they were called to enter. She, under pretence of conning her next part, was retired into a corner, reading a book of devotion, without at all concerning herself or mingling with the company—as if she had no further part to act, who was the principal person of the comedy."

Diana studying her prayer-book in a corner of the crowded green-room, amidst the rattle of free-and-easy converse! What a masque within the masque! One bends the knee to Margaret, and one longs to see her sweet lips tremble ever so slightly, curbing a rebel smile; for the contrast of the saint wrapt in prayer in the midst of those merry reprobates is a morsel of humour so delicate that the saint increases our admiration by the tribute of a humorous twinkle in her seraphic eye. What an edifying spectacle it all was for the ladies Mary and Anne of York! One can see the children pricking their ears to catch every fine point scored by the "ladyes railing with the gallants," and points perhaps a trifle blunt scored

by the gallants "railing" with the "ladyes." The arrows were no doubt deftly shot, so as to wound the virtuous Margaret in their ricochet; and if the princesses were slow-witted, arch glances shot at the maid-of-honour conning her book of devotion helped their intuition.

In very leisurely fashion the long drama unfolded its five acts, while the gallants and "ladyes" railed in the tireing-room; and galleries and gardens witnessed the artful artlessness of the coquette strayed from the theatre to the tryst. Margaret's spirit was, indeed, foreign to such a rout. "Without complimenting any creature," says Evelyn, "or trifleing with the rest who staid the collation and refreshment that was prepared, away she slips, like a spirit, to Berkeley House and to her little Oratorye, whither I waited on her, and left her on her knees thanking God that she was delivered from the vanity, and with the Saviour againe."

Godolphin, whose history is so closely interwoven with this period, afterwards married the nun-like Margaret, and for eight years the "treasure without price" was left him. He proved his constancy to her by never marrying again. Godolphin was as yet low down the ladder of success, but Dunblane, one of the gentlemen who danced with Monmouth in

the masque, represented in a sense the zenith of politics, for his father was that Earl of Danby, after Duke of Leeds, in whom craft amounted almost to genius. His freedom from commonplace scruples was a theme that constantly tempted the scribblers of the day to air their wit at his expense. One lampoon epitomised his deserts in this popular doggerel:

> Of subjects I have ne'er heard tell,
> Nor could any in this land be,
> That deserve a halter half so well
> As Thomas, Earl of Danby.

"You must allow," says Bellguard to Leonara, "that a jewel is not so safe in a crowd as when locked up." The jewels of Bellguard's metaphor here found their chief security in the multiplicity of rogues. The Duchess of Cleveland, loveliest of courtesans, most implacable of viragos, was amongst the audience. But her grace had a fair deputy on the stage in the person of the Countess of Sussex, her daughter, who was entrusted with the part of Juno, and who, if heredity afforded a guarantee of ability, ought to have excelled as an exponent of the vindictive goddess's wrath and jealousy. Cleveland's rival, the volatile Louise de Querouaille, Duchess of Portsmouth, unofficial Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to Charles, was perhaps

a subject for commiseration, because none of her progeny figured as nymph or god or goddess. But the evening had its compensations likewise for her. She had the gratification of seeing there her sister, the Countess of Pembroke, a blushing bride, who, pirouetting in the train of Calisto as an attendant nymph, modestly personified Louise's respect for the holy state of matrimony, and a substantial jointure!

Long after Margaret had fled to her "Oratorye," long after she had left her "Oratorye" for her couch, the salons of Whitehall rang with the laughter of the giddy throng devotedly bent on prolonging every exquisite moment of pleasure. With eyes heavy with weariness, and hearts perhaps a little sad for the delirium too quickly passed, the ladies of York took leave of the Merrie Monarch, the weary beauties, and the yawning gallants. And then at last the lights burnt low. The laughter grew infrequent and rang hollow, until at length the chilly sense of loneliness crept upon the palace, and the only signs of life remaining were the sentinels keeping their sleepless vigil.

## CHAPTER IV

TO his pillow, on the night of the masque, a gentleman of the Court carried, one would fain believe, the vision of a sweet nymph, a mere child of nine, with silvery voice and all the charm of perfect innocence, where innocence was the supreme jest and the supreme jewel. The gentleman was the Earl of Mulgrave, Knight of the Garter, and the nymph was Anne of York.

Some half-dozen years rolled by, chequered by many and sharp vicissitudes for the York family. Anne was now a comely girl of sixteen, endowed with the soft, winsome charm of irresponsible and high-spirited girlhood. The gift of all others that captivates most unfailingly was hers—a sweet voice modulated with unaffected grace. When Anne spoke, the syllables were music welling forth melodiously from a magic flute, every vibration expressive of a heart more fearless than kind, the heart of a winning young barbarian. Her cheeks had that charm of colour that seldom

warms perfection of feature, while her hands and feet, strictly beautiful in every tapering line, in every gracious curve, were classics of symmetry.

To this untamed nymph, with the voice that awakened strange chords of perilous sympathy in the too responsive bosoms of the cavaliers of the Court, there came at this time the first dream of love. This page of Anne's story embellished with roses tells but a broken tale. Yet a fragment of Palissy is often more precious than cold perfection void of soul or sentiment. This episode in the girlhood of the young princess, with the glowing cheeks ruddy and alluring with the quick blood of youth, and the hands and feet of a masterpiece of Praxiteles, is an idyll—the only one in a career that never again strayed from the prose of life into the enchanted realms of poetry. Her lover was young and handsome, blithe and débonnaire, with much of the physical charm of a Monmouth, but immeasurably his superior in grace of mind. Her cavalier, too, was bold in love and bold in war as ever was knight of Arthurian legend; and if his puissance fell short of the grandeur of Sir Galahad's boast:

> But all my heart is drawn above
> My knees are bow'd in crypt and shrine;
> I never felt the kiss of love
> Nor maiden's hand in mine,

From a mezzotint engraving by R. Cooper, after the painting by W. Wissing.

PRINCESS ANNE IN EARLY YOUTH.

p. 48.

Anne at least knew nothing, or ought to have known nothing, of the Earl of Mulgrave's wilder and less poetical transports in the domain of romance. But the maid, if not the knight, was happily worthy of Arthurian ideals, courageous as a lioness with her ladies, but timid and gentle as a fawn with the gallant whose shadow she could have kissed. If sixteen enamours at all it is flawless and sinless, because it is all flaws and sins—little flaws that are only foibles, and innocent little sins that every Elizabeth, and Teresa, and Agnes, of them all might have sinned.

Who can tell when a romance begins where the man knows the maid from the cradle, and he is amongst the first heroes of her childish imagination? The Duke of York had a warm regard for Mulgrave, who repaid the Prince's affection with loyalty as sincere as he was capable of, and one suspects that Anne, on entering her teens, began to have tender visions of the future with the young Earl as their inspiration. How could the little Princess help it, when none of the friends of the York household were so handsome, none so witty, none more fearless than he! And Mulgrave, arch-rogue where gentle hearts were the prize, if he read her secret, took care to fan the flame. If no one can fix a day when these two read in each other's eyes the attraction of

heart for heart, there is also some uncertainty as to whether the spring of 1679–80, or a later period, witnessed the unhappy climax of the courtship.

The romance, whenever begun, ran the brief course of its serious phase at Windsor. There, amidst the seductive glades in the spring time, Anne and Mulgrave met, and in the mysterious silences of green and woodland, Nature wove her sweetest spell, and upon each there fell the world-old enchantment. It was the time when Windsor was a Castle of Anacreon. The terrace, with its festive groups, "resembled a picture by Watteau; the courts resounded with laughter, and the velvet sod of the Home Park was as often pressed by the foot of frolic beauty as by that of the tripping deer."

Mulgrave was a man of about thirty, the age perhaps most dangerous to sixteen. Thirty is young as the youngest, and withal old as Methuselah to a girl midway in her teens. She can look up to him without feeling oppressed with reverence. If in docile mood, she can approve his wisdom; if it be her hour of petulance, or her day of vixenish crotchets, she can quarrel with him, for his airs have not the sanction of silver locks. His wisdom, in truth, is not wisdom at all, only the conceit of a youngster who has climbed in red-hot haste, just a little in advance of herself, the tree of the

knowledge of good and evil. She already feels the first boughs swaying beneath her own weight, and with pulses bounding to this novel exhilaration she dares to challenge her mentor.

Mulgrave was a favourite officer of the King's household. He had qualities which made him the beau ideal of a Restoration courtier. Courts and salons and battlefields had been his University, but he was also something of a scholar and littérateur—qualities which, though not superlative credentials in Court and Society, were nevertheless invaluable auxiliaries where wit and grace and tact were the passports from obscurity to fortune.

Mulgrave had donned the toga at an early age When he was only sixteen he had borne arms against the Dutch. Having proved his mettle, the handsome and accomplished youth, conscious of his talents, felt it would be a crime against Providence to lose his head before he had begun to make practical use of its manifold resources. His thirst for glory temporarily sated, he had forged his long sword into a dainty Court rapier, and carved a road for himself to the favour of Charles and Royal preferment.

Mulgrave's brief courtship of Anne was not an airy castle reared for the dreaming of a spring-tide dream. It was a century when a woman was old at twenty, and at sixteen she



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was ready to be won, or conquered, or captured. A girl, therefore, was little more than a child when the freedom associated with childhood was restrained. To pat the lass's head with a patronising hand conveyed a desire to possess the maiden's own. Beg of her a ringlet! and her pout of disdain was but a pretty affectation, while she wondered if her head were coveted as well as the tresses. We have seen how, when Anne was only nine, she was launched into the vortex of gay licentiousness. The night on which she had played Nyphe her eyes must have been opened dimly to the secrets which, guarded only by a gossamer veil, are the death of childhood's innocence. The sighing, the languishing eyes, the honeyed words, the laughter eloquent of the *arrière-pensée*, the women's comments on the women, the flashes from envious eyes, were all, no doubt, conned over at leisure by the young girl, pieced together, disordered and readjusted, until the instinct of womanhood found the key that read some glimmer of intelligence into it all.

Child though Nyphe was, she must have heard her companions in the masque talk of Monmouth's marriage when he was but a boy to a little girl of about his own age. Monmouth's was no isolated instance of such boy-and-girl unions. Had Anne any doubts as to their

propriety? Then there was her father, wedded to one who might almost be his granddaughter, though he was still a young man. Was she weak in arithmetic? Perhaps; but she could easily manipulate the simple figures which proved her more nearly a match for Mulgrave than Mary of Modena was for His Highness her father.

Finding herself at Windsor, where every avenue was the scene of some courtier's love suit, Anne would have been more or less than a girl did she not roam the glorious pleasaunces half-afraid, and half-praying, that in every copse there tarried the lord who would be her partner in this great game, of which the King was captain-general.

Mulgrave, looking out from the castle, spied the damsel in her quest, and registered the vows for which in a little while he was to do penance. The Earl, who was a devotee of the Muse, especially the amorous Muse, might have quoted to himself amidst the conflagration of his latest passion the poem, three centuries old, of "The King's Quair," in which a prisoner at Windsor, an ancestor of Anne, sang of his love for a heroine whose blood coursed in the young princess's veins. The prisoner was Prince James of Scotland, and his divinity, "the fairest and freshest younge flower" that ere he saw, was

Jane of Beaufort, granddaughter to John of Gaunt. The exquisite naïveté of "The King's Quair" leaves behind a fragrance very different from that of Mulgrave's sophisticated lyre. The kindly fortune which had smiled on the captive prince's suit held aloof from the gallant Earl who laid siege to Jane of Beaufort's successor in the realms of romance, with the complacency of a coxcomb, ignorant of the meaning of defeat save in the affairs of other mortals.

Greatly daring was Anne to enter such lists. Feeble was the resistance she could make to so formidable a lover. The young Earl was one of the handsomest men of his day. His features were delicately moulded, his face of a regular oval, while his expression combined the most extraordinary sweetness with a lively and penetrating look, indicative in some degree of his clear insight into affairs, and of the well-balanced judgment of which he was afterwards to give such unmistakable proofs. A more useful ally to success in love than his shrewd judgment was his singularly impressionable and sympathetic temperament. "I was angry with you a moment ago," he would say to his servant. "I did not mean half what I said." A man capable of that confession had mastered the art of cajoling men into loyalty and women into love. He laughed as readily as a school-girl,

and as quickly his mood changed from exuberant gaiety to pensive melancholy. At a tale of distress the tears were not far from his eyes, and his temper was roused as easily as his sympathies.

But no man dare trifle with the gentle Earl. Without a trace of braggadocia, he was ever ready to encounter death on the duelling ground, or relieve the monotony of a sybarite's days with a term of service at the wars. While the lighter qualities of his nature were more French, or perhaps Irish, than English, he was on his sterner side almost the typical Briton idealised n song and story—a man of strong passions, without a spark of affinity to the spiritual, practical in business, sentimental when convenient, ready to fight if action were demanded, and quick to forgive, especially when his were the winning colours.

When once Mulgrave had set his heart on marrying the princess, the courtship, we may well believe, galloped to a crisis. Swiftly those golden days fled past; but while they lasted there was dallying in the glade and sauntering on the sward. No warder ever scanned the landscape more keenly than did Anne from the castle casements when the King and the gentlemen went a-hunting, and her gallant was away. It was a comedy as well as a romance. The

tiny, silken-sandled feet of the princess often danced impatiently over the sloping pastures, through the aisles of the forest, up the terraces and down the terraces, tingling to meet him and half planning flight from him.

Sighing to be courted, she the while played the part of transparent innocence to her father and step-mother, and the sophisticated ladies-of-honour, to whom the nervous poise of her head, the unusual fall of a ringlet, the novel challenge of a ribbon, told all as plainly as though the idyll were written in black and white amongst the Castle chronicles.

These same ladies must have been rather provoking personages to the girl in love, with their music and their embroideries, and their stupid games. A plague even on cards! Hitherto these were her perpetual delight. They were now the proper distraction of aged persons of twenty and upwards, but only penitential exercises to a wiseacre of sixteen who had been initiated into giddier delights. The gossip of the dames, a little while ago so exciting, was now inexpressibly tedious, because she had drawn near to the fountain of their most piquant stories, to the inspiration of their most significant nods and pauses, to the object of their gasps of indignation, and the author of their wide-opened eyes of astonishment—his Highness, Man!

But one fine day an end came to all the pleasant dalliance in the glade and the sauntering on the sward with her Garter Knight.

The King spoke one little word, and the castle in the air had vanished; and Anne, self-appointed maid-of-honour to the Queen of the Fairies, found herself leaden-footed and leaden-hearted, a love-sick princess of a prosaic world.

Sarah Jennings has been suspected of playing the spy upon the lovers. It has been said that she probably showed to the King a billet-doux passing between her playfellow of the old manor house at Richmond, and Mulgrave. It is likely enough. Sarah was not a maiden to stick at a nice point of honour, if her interests beckoned her along a contrary path. It may well be supposed that zealous Royalists were not wanting to prompt Sarah to treachery, were prompting needed, and to devise schemes for ensuring that the course of true love should not evade its legitimately rugged course. Mulgrave possessed too many of the best gifts of the gods not to be coveted by the women of the Royal circle and envied by the men. Jealous courtiers could not forgive him that he was so pleasing to Charles. Only one woman could absolve him, and she would be the one to whom he made love—in this case a girl, and a very young and helpless one.

Whoever betrayed the lovers, Charles evinced his gratitude by acting with the promptitude of a guardian caught napping in the hour of crisis. With the energy that His Majesty was capable of displaying on those rare occasions when he was aroused to action, he destroyed with a word the pleasant fabric of Mulgrave's too ambitious dreams.

What passed between Charles and his gentleman-of-the-bedchamber would be a dialogue for gods and men to feast on. Mulgrave was afraid of nothing living, not even of the King. Charles, on the other hand, had a lively horror of cutting a ridiculous figure. Here was one whose wits were sharper than his own, and whose nerves were steadier. Charles would sacrifice every Stuart save himself rather than be laughed at. How the Royal fingers must have tingled to box the ears of the froward minx who had contrived this tragi-comic tableau! Not that the pair were without his pitying contempt. All lovers had that. When the interview was over Mulgrave was no longer a gentleman-of-the-bedchamber, and his fate was a warning to the other courtiers that, though Anne was willing to be wooed, she was not to be won by an Englishman.

Mulgrave's punishment was a heavy one, for he was deprived of all his honours. As a sort

of left-handed mark of the King's favour, he was, however, given a command from which could be reaped neither glory nor profit, but which offered some promise that he had not alienated for ever the Royal favour. Tangier was at the time besieged by the Moors, and to Mulgrave was entrusted the task of bringing relief to the town. The expedition was in some quarters thought to be specially adapted for a destination of less precise latitude and longitude. Mulgrave's ship was so unseaworthy, the admiral at Tangier expressed surprise that the voyage had ever been accomplished. Mulgrave himself seems to have shared in the surprise. Amongst his officers was the young Earl of Plymouth, one of Charles's favourite sons; but, notwithstanding his presence, Mulgrave pointedly refrained from the usual loyal compliment of drinking the health of His Majesty nightly. He reserved this pleasure for a later occasion, when he trusted that the kindness of the elements would enable him to drink to His Majesty with more sincere devotion than he could possibly feel when exposed to grievous peril on his august sovereign's most rotten ship. That Charles was aware of the condition of the hulk in which the disgraced Earl was sent into exile is, however, most unlikely. The presence of Plymouth forbids the notion. Nor is there the

least reason to suppose that Mulgrave held the King to blame for the danger thus thrust upon him. The contempt which he showed for etiquette, by banning the loyal toast, was meant, doubtless, as the straightforward retort for injuries received of a devil-may-care English earl to a king whom he half-liked and half-despised.

During the voyage to Tangier Mulgrave's chief distraction was writing poetry, if poetry much of it might be called. But he wrote, we may believe, as he thought, as he spoke, as he lived. To know this lover of Anne in her teens—her uncle's boon companion, her father's cynical friend, faithful to a point, her brother-in-law's creditor for timely service, her own staunch friend from her Coronation to the desolate morning when she took leave of earth at Kensington—is to know the England of his long, careless, selfish day, and why its destiny took the shape it did. Here is the candid avowal of the lawless law that was the rule of life for men and women of fashion of the sphere in which he loved to shine:

> Our appetites are Nature's laws, and giv'n
> Under the broad, authentic seal of Heav'n.
> Let pedants wrangle, and let bigots fight
> To put restraint on innocent delight;
> But Heav'n and Nature's always in the right.
> They would not draw poor wretched mortals in,
> Or give desires that shall be doomed to sin.

The philosophy of such a sybarite could extract from disgrace and exile no compensations. His was an intellect in which all third-rate qualities blended harmoniously, and were refined to the highest polish. But at no point did he touch the heroic. He was a soldier, but no general; a thinker, but his trade was in other men's ideas; a politician, but no statesman. His morals constituted studious care of his health, and his religion was that of Nature interpreted through his appetites. Within a brief space the Royal anger was appeased, and Mulgrave was back once more in England in the enjoyment of all his old honours. Never again was he condemned to expiate a sin against Royalty. He had taken his last risk in love and war. Henceforth the colours of his supreme devotion were those of the House of Mulgrave. His cool and cynical judgment enabled him not only to hold his ground, but to improve it in the face of the most embarrassing complications.

James II. made him a Privy Councillor and Lord Chamberlain. At the Revolution his sympathies were with James, but never so ardently as with himself. They therefore attached him to the party that suited the convenience of a nobleman who disliked enforced residence abroad. His good fortune threw in his way an

opportunity of saving the Spanish Ambassador's life in the midst of the turmoil which attended James's flight. His resourcefulness secured for him the thanks, not only of James, but the gratitude of William. His crowning honour came appropriately from his lady-love of the old Windsor romance. When Anne, a sedate young matron, ascended the Throne, she made her old cavalier Duke of Buckinghamshire; not that his grace had earned such advancement by his tender constancy to the sentiment which had brought him to her feet in her girlhood.

Far, indeed, from permitting his heart to wither, a sorrowful tribute on the shrine of a hopeless passion, Mulgrave has earned immortality amongst the poets as the gayest apologist of Inconstancy. A woman can never perhaps smile with unalloyed pleasure at the memory of a first love rudely blighted. But the wound had cut deep into Anne's heart, if she was not diverted by the Earl's witty and impudent defence of his adventures in the field of gallantry. Perhaps, indeed, she recognised in the lines the merry scorn of one who, in a playful way, could not quite forgive her that she too lived, like himself, to enjoy life, when she ought to have languished and died for love of him! Perhaps, with a woman's faculty for

From an engraving.

JOHN SHEFFIELD, EARL OF MULGRAVE, LATER DUKE OF BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

p. 62.

divining such secrets, she read in the poem his answer to some beauty's sighs, who feared lest one who had so easily consoled himself for the loss of a princess would lightly cast aside a charmer of simpler station. If the "Glorianna" of the Earl's verses was indeed but another name for Anne, one can imagine how half-amused, half-vexed, wholly sorry at having been cheated of so clever, so tantalising, so audacious a lover, she read these lines:

I must confess I am untrue
To Glorianna's eyes,
But he that's smiled upon by you
Must all the world despise.

In winter fires of little worth
Excite our dull desire,
But when the sun breaks kindly forth
Those fainter flames expire.

Then blame not me for slighting now
What I did once adore,
O! do but this one change allow
And I can change no more.

Fixed by your never-failing charms
Till I with age decay;
Till languishing within your arms
I sigh my soul away.

Against so airy a traitor it was not possible to cherish anger, and Anne, always his friend, as he was always hers, had the satisfaction of

seeing three ladies fill in succession the place on Mulgrave's hearth he had designed for her. One of these was her half-sister, Catherine Darnley, daughter of Catherine Sedley, Countess of Dorchester and James II. Never had a man more excellent wives, according to the last will and testament of this genial epicure. But Anne was spared the mortification of learning how supremely blessed in his choice of partners was one whom she might not bless herself; for Mulgrave lived far into the Georgian period, and when his will was opened the princess of the Windsor idyll was no more.

## CHAPTER V

Dans l'âge où l'on est aimable
Rien n'est si beau que d'aimer,
Soupirez librement pour un amant fidèle,
Et bravez ceux qui voudraient vous blâmer.

AT the Court of St. James's the ladies sighed not less ardently to be loved than at Fontainebleau. Charles was the gayest patron in Europe of the mischievous god. To him there was indeed no other god worthy of Royal incense. It was his frolics which made the Court move to the tripping measure His Majesty fancied. But—there was the exception! The loyal sentiment "Soupirez librement" was in one gentle breast not loyalty at all, but treason to the Crown. To the maid of the Blood Royal was accorded merely the freedom of a novice, who, without any vocation to be a nun, had, as it were, to wait patiently for a passport from the cloister into the gay world whose laughter rang temptingly in her ears, while alluring visions haunted her isolation of girls of her own age being wooed and won by forbidden Man! The princes, her kinsmen, might

sigh for a new mistress with every breath; and by-and-by, when they had leisure, and events marched agreeably, they would lead her over the Rubicon to some half-unwilling knight flung in her way by the caprice of Fortune.

Mulgrave, with his facile temperament, his grace, his tact, his worship of pleasure, had he been chosen as the Duke of York's son-in-law, would have been a Stuart of the Stuarts, careless and gay as the King himself. But a voluptuary only he could not be, and while devoting himself to his Royal Glorianna with what constancy was possible to his inflammable heart, he would have fought and laughed his way to princely rank in the magnificent game of politics, whose leader was the god of Versailles, the proudest prince in Europe, Louis Quatorze.

The treasury of romance is the poorer by a rare jewel that Anne had not the spirit to brave them all and fly with her lover! Charles would have been angry for a week or a month; but, too selfish to harrow himself with an emotion so distressing, the lovers would soon have been received back into Royal favour. But Anne was too young to don male attire and ride away to her cavalier, like her ancestress Arabella Stuart, when they had tried to rob her of her Seymour. The fate of Arabella, and visions of a chilly boudoir in the Tower, all for her

own pretty self, may well have dissolved Anne's courage in tears; and many a day, weary with disappointment, rolled by before, having separated her from her too impetuous lover, they gave her in exchange a husband.

One wonders how much Anne was privileged to know of the comedy which made her Princess George of Denmark, after its scenes had been played out on the broad stage of Western Europe. A comedy it all was, with humour of the most subtle delicacy. This Princess, with the soft, round cheeks, and the luxuriant brown hair, and the gentle, languishing eyes of a village Marguerite, was the despair of kings and princes, bishops and diplomatists. Many a weary minister, when exasperated with intrigues of which she was the subject, must have wished at times that she had indeed braved those who would blame or punish her, and ridden away with her Mulgrave. There would then have been so many knots the less to tie and untie while one's brain whirled and one's fingers ached curses.

Of the players in the game that had for its prize the selection of a husband for Anne, Louis Quatorze was the one whose position augured victory. Louis had at this time reached the zenith of his career. In war and peace and diplomacy he had triumphed. The subtle lessons of Mazarin he had learned well, and

applied with masterly discretion. Never was there a pupil more apt who yet perhaps had no spark of real genius. Charles II. had learned at his Court to live for the delights of the garden of Daphne; but he disdained the other traits of Louis' character—his orderliness, his industry, his readiness to leave the palace for the camp, to exchange the enchantment of the favourite of the hour for the thrill of battle.

Louis was neither a great soldier nor a great statesman; but, eager to be both, the day came when, as soldier and as statesman, he had won pre-eminence: and the world accepted him for what he would be. His beloved Versailles was now at last complete; and the Court of France, a world to itself, peopled with beauties and cavaliers too dainty to endure the manners of Paris, nursed dreams that, strangely enough, were never realised by the Grand Monarque, but were reserved to be the glory and the ruin of the Corsican emigrant who, poor and friendless, saw in a later generation the Throne of the Bourbons swamped in a sea of blood.

The day of the sweet Vallière, of the tyrant Montespan, of the lovely tigress Fontanges was at the time of which we write past. Louis was no longer the mettlesome blade who had poured out rivers of gold on fêtes to delight Vallière, and had raced the winds with Fontanges

in the delirium of the chase at Fontainebleau. It was the austere repentant Louis who had fallen under the spell of Madame de Maintenon, who one day recalled the existence of his little English friend of the sixties, the old-time guest of the lovely Henrietta of Orleans and his brother Philip. . . . Most àpropos, Stuart demoiselle! To the devil with her sister Mary! She had married his arch-enemy Orange. But Anne remained; Heaven-sent Anne! She would be another Jeanne D'Arc, not a Jeanne mounted on charger, with lance in rest cheering his troopers onwards, but a Jeanne either to win towns and plains for him, or to prevent Orange from winning them, by bestowing her hand on the prince approved by France.

Louis had learnt in tears that marrying and giving in marriage was the time when an astute King mapped out the frontiers of his future empire, and snatched victories that reduced his enemies to the dust, without the loss of a man or a ducat. He had been obliged to master that lesson while yet the fire of young blood made it unendurably bitter. It was a lesson paid for in the romance of his early youth. Marie Mancini, niece of Mazarin, had won his affections when he was only twenty-one, and piteously as ever prince pleaded for his life, did Louis pray the Queen-mother, Anne of Austria, and the Cardinal, for

permission to follow the impulses of his heart. But in vain were all his prayers, and Louis had to resign his beloved Marie for a bride whose dowry was worthy of his kingdom.

If Marie Mancini had been sacrificed to an ideal, why not Anne Stuart? So France competed with Spain and Austria and Holland for the privilege of presiding at the sacrificial altar. The ambition of Louis was to surmount the Crown of France with the Crown of the Empire. The policy of Austria and her allies was to thwart the schemes of France, and their ablest instrument for this purpose was the redoubtable Orange. The enmity with which France and the Austrian Empire regarded each other was reflected in the policy of every European State. So powerful were these rivals that their neighbours should perforce take sides, the solitary Power which might have enjoyed a position of independence being England. Her friendship was therefore a boon eagerly coveted by the continental princes. Charles, however, had to meet the demands of his extravagant seraglio, and was glad to barter his political opportunities for a pension from Louis and the favour of Louise de Querouaille. Thus it came to pass that the English king had to experience the mortification of seeing his niece figuring as a mere pawn in the politics of foreign States.

After a contemporary picture.

MADAME DE MAINTENON.

p. 70.

North and south, east and west, through Europe, the envoys of the opposing Courts posted in quest of princes agreeable to their policy, who might be put forward as suitable aspirants for the Royal damsel. But a famine had fallen upon the Continent, and eligible bachelors grew suddenly scarce and of great worth. England was the land of princely uncertainty. Who would go there to seek an alliance which seemed to offer some prospect of a part on the stage of another tragedy of Whitehall, in which James of York would figure in his father's place, and wise Heaven alone could tell what distinction on that day of wrath would be assigned to Anne's husband !

The subtlest schemer in this elaborate comedy of matchmakers was William of Orange. He had married Anne's sister Mary in defiance of her father, almost in defiance of Charles, although he had a year or two before apparently thrown away his chances by refusing the Princess's hand. Bitterly had Mary cause to regret his repentance of his first scornful rejection ; and to The Hague Anne could always turn to contemplate in its most arid desolation married misery. William's signal qualification as a bridegroom was that the bride's family were afraid of him, and made the mistake of supposing that an uncousinly cousin might be converted to a more affectionate dis-

position by forging for him newer and closer ties of kinship.

Mary's departure for Holland was, for the bride, more akin to a funeral than a wedding. It was indeed a festival only for one of the maids-of-honour, Mary's old playfellow Elizabeth Villiers. The chivalry of this brother-in-law, who now would be her pilot to matrimonial happiness, Anne might well have distrusted. Louis was at least a connoisseur of the beautiful if a bad husband. His Paris was the city of light. But out of The Hague nothing lovely could come. Better to be another Henrietta of Orleans, numbing disappointment with the narcotic of pleasure, than a Mary of Orange, sick with sorrow, and mooning away her days under the frigid rule of an austere Lothario !

Just as the fate of Arabella Stuart may have deterred her from eloping with Mulgrave, so the same sad story may well have made Anne rejoice that William was not the absolute master of her destiny. Arabella had been condemned to celibacy by James I., who feared that the unhappy lady's children might become rivals for the Crown. The friendless girl was imprisoned at the will of the Sovereign, while the noble she dared to look upon with favour was sent to the Tower. When, in a frantic effort to secure liberty, and love, and the joys of home and

husband, the girl donned doublet and hose, and fled, the malice of the King pursued her, thwarted her, and brought her back to lifelong imprisonment and to madness such as crazed Ophelia; until, finally, a broken heart released a broken spirit, and Arabella Stuart passed beyond the arm of a jealous tyrant. Just as James I. plundered Arabella's life of all that a woman cherishes most tenderly, so would Anne have been the victim of William, had she been at his mercy. But, luckily for her, his power was not in proportion to his selfishness, and all he could do was to impede the negotiations for her marriage, and stave off as long as possible the evil day of the nuptials.

William had a double claim upon the English throne, through his mother, the sister of Charles II., and through his wife. Amongst the neighbouring German princes there was one too with Stuart blood in his veins, who might one day prove a rival to William's ambitions, and whose choice of a wife was consequently a subject that caused profound anxiety to the beneficent Dutchman. This was young George Louis of Hanover, son of the Elector, and afterwards George I. of England. George Louis was the great grandson of James I. through his daughter Elizabeth, who had married Frederick the Elector-Palatine.

George Louis was in 1680 in his twentieth year, and already a young profligate for whom

his mother earnestly desired the reforming influence of a wife. And the worthy maiden Anne Stuart wanted a husband! Here was a prospect irresistible to matchmakers, who would think only of the happiness of the young people. The sanguine thought the problem of Anne's future solved, and other problems too, which to politicians were of immeasurably greater moment. But it was not yet the hour for optimism. The ever-vigilant William had to guard against setting up a rival to his hopes; and Louis Quatorze had to look forward to George Louis in a dual rôle—as a German ruler, and as a possible king of England marshalling his twofold strength on the side of the Empire against France. In 1680 the young Hanoverian paid a visit to The Hague, and shortly afterwards an event occurred which foreshadowed the future course of English history, though none were so blind to the direction in which affairs were slowly drifting as the personages most deeply concerned.

Up the Thames, with all the pomp of mediæval pageantry, to visit the Court at Whitehall came the young German prince, who, when the next century was young, was to enter London as the founder of a new dynasty, the first Hanoverian king. George Louis had arrived to pay his *devoirs* to his

English kindred. Such was the formal explanation of his coming. But a motive more tender impelled this pilgrimage to a land that the youth had learned from his mother, and she from his grandmother, to regard with apprehension. There was Anne! And he kissed her before all the Court, while the King and the courtiers looked on at this meeting, which promised to weld together two branches of the Stuarts in a fashion little to the taste of Orange.

George was apparently well pleased with his English relatives, and, above all, with his young cousin of York. King Charles spared no pains to make himself agreeable to his German kinsman, and the wiseacres, putting their heads together, already began to talk of a Royal engagement. The Prince was only twenty, so that in years he was more a match for Anne than was William for her sister Mary, who was her husband's junior by about a dozen years. In his case, however, time hardly mattered. His heart was never young; nor had his spirits ever the buoyancy of youth. Not all the British Court, however, watched with sympathy the young German's coldly diplomatic wooing. Of his foes the chief were the King's son, the Duke of Monmouth, and the Earl of Danby. What Monmouth wished was but an echo of craftier minds, who employed his vanity to his

undoing. Danby's policy was, however, identical with that of Orange, who has been blamed that George recrossed the seas without taking with him the heart of the Princess of York, no longer precious, now that all the world knew there was no eager rivalry for its possession.

That kiss which had edified the Court was left to Anne only as a bitter remembrance of a mortifying episode. George departed from Whitehall without making any sign. He had had enough of England and its Royal Family, and would bestow his affections on one who, did she but know it, was more unfortunate than the forlorn Lady Anne; and she must have begun to repine that for an English princess there was the asylum of no sequestered cloister, where, if suitors there were none, there would at least be peace. Whatever the share of blame that properly belonged to Orange, of George himself it was probably true that he disliked the notion of being drawn into the affairs of a country where, in Court and Parliament, chaos reigned.

Between him and King Charles there was no affinity, still less had he anything in common with the Duke and Duchess of York. Above all, Anne knew nothing of his beloved Hanover, ignorance that might in George's eyes have damned the fairest maid in all England. So back he went to his home, the Man of Destiny,

who would return thirty years afterwards to assume the Crown for which the Lady Anne, the rejected of his youth, had by a strange vagary of fortune sinned and suffered to endow him !

Two years rolled on. One German prince after another was, in this quarter or that, proposed as a candidate for Anne's hand. But for this reason one was rejected, for that reason the other. In the midst of all this insincerity and make-believe, well might Anne have begged of all her gods to revive her passion for basset and lansquenet, that she might not die of a broken heart, with gay and handsome fellows around her, ready to console her if only they dared, or rather if only she dared to flash upon them the glance of invitation or acquiescence.

For a space, brief and brilliant, Anne's name was coupled with the chivalrous Charles XI. of Sweden. But Louis had other designs for Sweden than a marriage which might well alter the whole current of European history ; and Orange would probably have resorted to desperate expedients to prevent a union which would have imperilled the fair edifice of his hopes. It looked, indeed, in these gloomy days as though the best prince she would ever possess would be the king of trumps at the card-table, and that Orange would enjoy the satisfaction of seeing his young sister-in-law glide into the slough of confirmed spinsterhood.

But at last Anne was led over the Rubicon to the unknown knight, who proved to be George of Denmark. His highness was insignificant amongst princes. But amongst husbands of his day he earned a sort of canonisation; for of all the tears that Anne shed—and her life was brimful of sorrow—not one could be charged to his account. Orange hated him, perhaps for no better reason than that George regarded him with awe. The Dane was a strapping soldier, as weak in intellect as he was gigantic in physique; as brave as a lion in battle, but with that dread of the contempt of sharper wits which some dull fellows are intelligent enough to feel. George possessed no quality of head which could appeal to the fragile Dutchman; and qualities of heart had little attraction for one whose schemes and ambitions were bounded by no vestige of scruple. He did his best to have the marriage abandoned, and nominated the Electoral Prince of Brandenburg as a substitute for the honour. But Charles was weary of William and of his Machiavellian proposals. France was satisfied with the Prince of Denmark, and the bargain was struck.

Thus ended the long-drawn-out comedy, and the part for which she had been cast by destiny was assigned to Anne of York, who, in July 1683, in her nineteenth year, became the bride of a Royal moss-trooper.

## CHAPTER VI

THE day was gone, the day of dazzling brightness. It was night, and the King slept, would sleep for ever!

"Poor Nelly! Don't let her starve," were almost the last words Charles uttered; these, and an apology for being so slow in dying. The others might look to themselves, Louise and Barbara, and the rest. They were personages of consideration in the land, who met ministers on terms of equality, and boldly threw themselves into the war of factions; Louise daring even to hope that her son might oust the Duke of York, and be chosen for the Crown.

But when Charles breathed his last, a strange paralysis seized the factions. The King was dead and the King lived; not Monmouth, or Richmond, or Orange, but James of York. Without a murmur, courtesans and courtiers, they all saluted him as their Sovereign. Disloyalty was dumb.

Within these last few hours James had risked much in an adventure for his dying

brother's sake, an adventure undertaken for the King's soul, that recalled some forty years before, when the life of Charles was saved at Boscobel, as flying from his enemies after the battle of Worcester destruction threatened him. The oak-tree at Boscobel that hid the fugitive Prince in its loyal bosom was a familiar friend to one, who often in these days of religious persecution stood in need of such a retreat. This was Father Huddlestone, a Benedictine monk. The monk and the oak saved the Prince after the calamity of Worcester.

Then the storm passed; and the Prince forgot the priest, and thought but little of the oak-tree that preserved him for the dignity of a throne and the joyous years of a despotism of pleasure. But at last the clouds gathered again. The affrighted Prince turned to the hour-glass. Alas! these silent sands trickling to the final grain afforded no solace. It was another more terrible Boscobel; for it was for him the very end of the world. Oh for the gentle Huddlestone and the kindly, loyal oak! With that appeal in the dying man's heart, the Arch-Magician willed a miracle; and lo! here was Huddlestone on his knees beside the bed of the reprobate King, just as though all the intervening years had been but a dream, and Whitehall, the home of the gallant Pendrills, close by the woodlands of Boscobel.

Little wonder the fascination of the Stuarts subdues each succeeding generation, when Heaven itself transformed the death-chamber of its most cynical prince into the very alembic of romance.

When by a secret door the Benedictine entered the bedroom of the expiring monarch, the drama, the tragedy of realism, achieved its purest triumph. Little had Charles recked about the mysteries of eternity while bright eyes warmed his vagabond blood. And now, in his supreme need, Louise de Querouaille, his favourite companion, was disconsolate, not for losing her Royal lover, but lest her lover should lose his soul. Most precious soul now to one hitherto greedy only for honours and gold! Fools and children, with some faint spark of saintship in the midst of all their devilry, these mortals be! Louise it was who sent to James, begging that he should get a confessor for the dying man. James hurried to his brother's bedside, around which crowded a number of those entitled to the entrée. Whispering in the ear of the King, James inquired if Louise's message were really a mandate from the Sovereign.

"With all my heart!" answered Charles, who feared, however, that his brother would incur grievous peril by obeying his behest.

"Though it cost me my life, I will bring your Majesty a priest," was the reply of the soldierly

duke who, on the threshold of his new honours, was yet ready to take a risk, which might well have lost him the Crown.

Hither and thither the Royal messengers hurried through London, scouring the town for a priest, but no priest could be found to shrive the dying monarch; and it seemed as though Charles were doomed to pass away, unfulfilled the last desire of a heart that had worshipped in Desire its lord and its god. Then by sublime coincidence the venerable Huddlestone appeared on the scene; and the oak-tree episode that had followed the fight and disaster of Worcester became an allegory, a prophetic symbol, that was accomplished in the death-bed repentance of a rake whose sins, and selfishness, and dying act of contrition, and one knows not what else it may be, lend to his memory a charm that is immortal.

A young married lady living at the Cockpit in Whitehall was an agitated, and not altogether friendly, observer of the altered fortunes of James, Duke of York, now James II. The lady was the Princess Anne, who for a couple of years had been the wife of Prince George of Denmark.

The Princess had reached her twenty-first year when King Charles died. Life at the Cockpit should have been a happy one for a young woman of larger mind and livelier affection for her

From a photo by Emery Walker, after the painting by P. Mignard in the National Portrait Gallery.

THE DUCHESS OF PORTSMOUTH,
LOUISE RENÉE DE PENENCOURT DE QUEROUAILLE.

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kindred than Anne cherished. Her income was magnificent, her fortune was without a shadow, her home, if dull when compared with Whitehall or St. James's Palace, was at least not marred by a husband's infidelities. But Anne was not at peace with herself. A strange spirit of unrest had taken possession of her, filling her with ambition and impatience. The way of the Stuarts was not her way at all. With all their faults, that unfortunate dynasty always expected loyalty from its members, and found it. James himself was one of the most bitterly persecuted, but one of the most faithful subjects of the King. There was chivalry and profligacy and prodigality in the veins of their men and women. But they loved splendour and pleasure rather than power. They had no Richard of Gloucester, no Henry Tudor. Their jealousies were not about Crown jewels, but about the jewels of the Court; and in nigh a century of English sovereignty the race had so far bred no usurper.

One reviews the gallery of them all, and finds there none like Anne. Most of her defects, and all her virtues, were from her mother; her ambitions were from the race of lawyers, not from the race of kings. Instead of revelling in youth and rank and splendid fortune, Anne despised the honours she might have enjoyed, and in secret hungered for those to which her father had

attained after long years of suffering and uncertainty.

Differences of temperament do not explain Anne's want of affection for her father, nor yet the fact that her grandfather carried "a green bag" to the law-courts, the odour of which was said by a supersensitive prince to cling about the person of her mother! It would be a mad world indeed were parents loved only by children of dispositions congenial to their own. Nature had apparently implanted in Anne no sense of duty, and art had done nothing to fill the void. That it should be so was a punishment greater perhaps than James merited in yielding up his right to be master of the destinies of his children. It was only, however, after her marriage, when entirely removed from the influence of the gentle Mary of Modena, that malice and envy began to flourish luxuriantly in the young Princess's bosom. Surrounded by every luxury that her father could provide, his generosity seemed only to inflame the envy which, with the perfection of art, was concealed by this Royal actress.

The Cockpit, so liberally endowed by its mistress's father, was, from the days of her honeymoon, a school of treason towards its paternal benefactor. In this respect the place was but preserving its traditions, for its previous tenant was the crafty Danby, ever James's foe.

The misfortunes which the Duke and Duchess of York had to encounter during the last years of Charles's life were shared by Anne until the time of her marriage. She was a partner in their exile, and in sorrows that pressed still more heavily upon them she, too, suffered, and mingled her tears with theirs. The story goes that Anne quarrelled one day with Mary of Modena, who, they say, threw a glove in her stepdaughter's face. Mary was proud and quick-tempered, but it is unlikely that she ever manifested resentment in a manner so undignified, least of all to one whom she desired to love, if only that she might promote her husband's happiness.

Buoyant spirits and a lively wit were natural to Mary before sorrow had crushed her to the dust, and strange would it be if such qualities did not attract Anne to one but little older than herself, who, moreover, in loving her, possessed the key to her heart. The key, indeed, to all hearts was the young Italian's in the early days of her married life, and even her imperfections were those which might be readily forgiven by a spirited people who, slow to evince emotion themselves, readily excuse the lapses of warmer natures.

Excessive pride of birth was, it would seem, a blemish in Mary's character, if we may judge of her by an anecdote in which the famous

General Dalziel made her smart for her inordinate esteem of the Estes. James had invited the General to dinner, but Mary thought the gallant officer's rank hardly warranted this honour. Unluckily for her, Dalziel arrived just as she was debating with her husband the etiquette of Royal hospitality.

"Madam," said the great man, blind to the drollery of such a welcome, "I have dined at a table where your father stood behind my back!"

The General's allusion was to the time when he served in the Imperial army and dined in state with the Emperor, while the Duke of Modena attended as vassal of His Majesty. The incident may have had no better foundation than the wit of some admirer of Dalziel's, or some enemy of Mary's. If Mary was proud of her lineage, Anne was hardly less disposed to exaggerate the dignity of the Blood Royal, so that even their foibles should have tended to promote that harmony which stern circumstances conspired to warm into tenderness and sympathy and affection.

During the years immediately preceding James's accession, alarms and anxieties continually disturbed the Duke of York's household, welding its members more closely together, and obliging its ladies to discover in each other's society the solace and courage so grateful to the

strong and tried, and so indispensable to the young neophyte in the hard school of fortitude. Anne had to lean on Mary. Mary was glad to confide in Anne. Then there came babes, to link these two by ties deeper than friendship, deeper than those forged by affliction. Above all, there was Isabelle, the little sister who entered Anne's life to comfort her for the loss of the one whom Orange had carried off to The Hague. Anne's religion was, it is true, almost a certain shield for her in the midst of the strife of contending factions. But however precocious Anne may have been as a very young girl in her father's home, she could nevertheless have had but a faint understanding of the wheels within wheels of intrigue which tended to make her secure amidst all the perils which threatened her parents. That ambition for the Crown, which later gained complete mastery over her, devouring every finer feeling, and effacing the memory of the kindness lavished on her by the impulsive and warm-hearted Italian, until it became a consuming passion, raised no barrier between the child and the child-wife. It was only after her marriage that her eyes were fully opened to the dazzling future which the confusion of the times opened up to her, and that she consented to dally with the splendid temptation which wrought for her so much misery.

Anne's heart would have been that of no ordinary child did she shed no bitter tears when, in 1679, she saw her home broken up, and the pleasant music and games of St. James's exchanged for exile in Brussels. Her father and stepmother were ordered out of the kingdom by the monarch, who was powerless to protect his brother and sister-in-law from the popular clamour aroused by their adherence to the Catholic religion. Anne and her little five-year-old sister were not at first permitted to accompany their parents, but were condemned to the loneliness of a home from which had departed all that lent it warmth and light. But the State itself was not cruel enough to continue for long the punishment of the Royal children. Anne and little Isabelle, after a time, were permitted to join their parents abroad. But the grief of that separation was not easily obliterated from the younger child's memory.

Nor could Anne have quickly forgotten the despair of the little one, to whom every day was a year until she was united once more to her adoring mother. All too brief, however, was that union. James hastened from Brussels to London to see the King, who, being ill, secretly desired his presence. Pleased as he was to greet his brother, he was nevertheless obliged to order him again out of London, but this time he

tempered the mandate by allowing him to reside in Edinburgh. Now was the crown of the vicissitudes of those bitter days at hand. James conveyed his family from the Continent, and, leaving Anne and Isabelle at St. James's, the Duke and Duchess set out for Scotland. Only once again did they see the younger child; this was when they came south for a brief space, taking advantage of a lull in the storm that raged round them.

Isabelle, stricken down with illness amidst the frigid grandeur of St. James's Palace, begged in vain for her parents. For the soft music of her mother's voice she strained her ears, and on her pillow fell the hot tears of impatient childhood, impatient for the caresses of her father. It was the depth of winter, and the end had already come when, over the frozen roads, the post reached Edinburgh that told of the lonely chamber of sickness and tears, and a child's futile prayers in the grim palace far away to the south. Without a mother's hand to smooth her bed, and soothe her spirit with whispered legends of angel choirs and thrones of lily and gold, little Isabelle's heart ceased its longing, and the baby fingers groped no more for the shelter of the loving arms in which she would nestle to die.

In the gloomy palace, alone with the dead

child, Anne tasted something of the aching desolation which only a mourner in the echoing wilderness behind castle walls may feel. Often in after-life must that sense of cold abandonment, of utter dejection, have returned to her, as Death time and again crept into her home and turned to stone the babe newly given to her arms. And as she wept over the loss of her own children, and wept again at the tireless lash, the thought must often have returned to her of how little Isabelle was stolen from her mother, and how the mother was driven afar off from her doomed child. At such moments a flood of tenderness for Mary must have welled up in Anne's heart, because the affinity of the mother whose dearest treasure lies in the grave, for the mother as sadly bereaved as she herself, abides in the innermost sanctuary of woman's nature. It is an emotion tender, and subtle, and mysterious, that for enmity itself may not die.

But exile and the loss of one dearly loved were not the only trials before which Anne saw Mary of Modena bow her head, broken-hearted but uncomplaining. James unhappily multiplied her sufferings by his amorous lapses. As Anne advanced to womanhood she must have learned something of the adventures that had made her father notorious for gallantry, adventures that were by no means at an end. How this know-

From a mezzotint, after the picture by Sir Peter Lely.

ANNE'S BABY SISTER, LADY ISABELLE OF YORK.

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ledge affected the girl towards him we know not, but if her own life may be taken as a criterion of her feelings, they would be those of deep repulsion. Anne was, it has been said, no true Stuart. In nothing was she less a Stuart than in affairs of the heart, and it is at least possible that she first learned to hate her father because of that weakness of character which never spared her mother from humiliation, and never spared her own pride a wound. Incapable at once of being either a great sinner or a great saint, no kindly intuition helped Anne to forgive all by teaching her to understand and to know all.

It was the age when morals were for the halt, the blind, the maimed, the lowly. They had no concern with princes. It was Madame de Maintenon who begged Louis Quatorze to be kind to his wife; it was from his sister that Charles II. begged as a gift Louise de Querouaille. James was in this respect the peer of his brother princes of Europe. In London there was during his youth no gayer spark than he, and the jealous husband watched with terror the direction of his favours. Some of his earlier adventures were the laugh of the town, as when he was escorted by his friend Talbot to Lady Southesk's, and the lady's husband returned unexpectedly. Talbot, who did not know his relationship to the lady,

assumed that the new-comer was, unknown to himself, a rival of York's, and tendered him a gentle hint to consider himself vanquished and to retire. The husband did retire, but it was to plan a vengeance which was to entertain a society that could not be shocked.

At the period with which our history deals the Southesk episode was long past, and Catharine Sedley was the divinity who ruled James's heart. "Ugly Catharine's" position was well known to Mary of Modena, and doubtless to Anne. Whatever Anne's feelings may have been in connection with this scandal, of Mary's there was no doubt, for she was distracted with humiliation and jealousy.

When James succeeded to the Throne he made an effort to shake off the dominion of Catharine. But the victory at first rested with the lady; while his devoted Italian wife, ever faithful to him in good and evil fortune, bore with the dignity of a heroine the sorrows of injured wife, of bereaved mother, and persecuted queen.

By dint of prayers and tears Mary of Modena at long last did succeed in weaning James from the influence of Catharine, who, already Countess of Dorchester, was further compensated for her loss with four thousand a year. With all the freshness of youth departed, and no attraction left

her save her Rabelaisan humour, the Countess nevertheless found a husband. The fortunate suitor was Sir David Colyear, and his conquest was the theme of one of the Earl of Dorset's witty trifles:

Proud with the spoils of royal cully,
With false pretences to wit and parts,
She swaggers like a battered bully,
To try the temper of men's hearts.

. . . .

Though she appears as glittering fine
As gems, and jests, and paint can make her,
She ne'er can win a breast like mine:
The devil and Sir David take her!

The latter half of Dorset's prayer was heard. Sir David took the lady, the marriage being regarded as a sort of classic triumph of wit over beauty. And as for the first half, which consigned the Countess to eternal damnation, we may charitably hope it was averted. At all events, when no art could "mend a ruined face," or "make her a fine young thing," she became a diligent church-goer, which, if not an infallible sign of salvation, may at least be cherished as a hopeful omen for want of a better.

## CHAPTER VII

MERRY laughter of dames and gallants rang out over the hunting-field as their horses cantered gaily through the morning to where Destiny was being deftly shaped in the forge over the green. At that forge Fate was the master-smith, and for the fun of the sparks flying from his wonderful anvil, this rattling cavalcade would have galloped right to the devil himself.

As they rode they laughed, and when they drew rein round a maid-of-honour and a prince, both dismounted, heartier still was their mirth, while the beauties blushed with what success they could, and the cavaliers twitted them that their success should be so small in presence of a tableau so uncommonly delicate.

This master-smith was audacious and ingenious too, trifling with hearts in the midst of the excitement of the hunt, and forging links and welding lives for the mere sport of flourishing his hammer. This morning's work was to survive in its effects for long years, until it ultimately

served to associate the Princess Anne with the family which above all others owed to her fame and fortune, and to which she was to be indebted for her tyrant chieftainess. This family was, it need scarcely be said, the Churchills!

It was a fiery steed and a young horsewoman's faint heart that began the story. The girl was indolent, plain-looking, eighteen-year-old Arabella, sister of handsome Jack Churchill. Arabella was in those distant days a maid-of-honour in the York household. Her pale face, tall figure, slender to spareness, and her spiritless manner in a circle where vivacity was almost the first point in breeding, excited the derision of companions, many of whom had reasons that might not be published for esteeming beauty and impudence above all other endowments. James was one of those who was amused by Arabella rather than attracted towards her, until on to the scene galloped the mettlesome steed which pitched her, as it were, headlong into the Prince's life.

The adventure happened on a hunting expedition. Arabella was a timid creature, who would gladly have exchanged the saddle for a ride less dashing, but more secure, amongst the cushions of a coach. It was ordained, however, that she should not only ride on horseback, but that she

should be the best mounted of all the ladies in the field. Almost in tears on finding herself at the mercy of the animal whose restless capers drew upon her all eyes, Arabella, instead of attracting sympathy, became an object of amusement.

The ladies asked no better entertainment than that she should distinguish herself as a poor creature in the saddle. As for the gentlemen, they were there to enjoy themselves, and the more varied, the better the diversion. Whether the hand that ministered to their fine appreciation of the ridiculous was that of a benefactor or a benefactress, it would certainly be that of a ministering angel. Arabella, in despair, tugged at the bridle with all her strength; but excess of shame had left her nerveless, and the feeble pressure on the bit only made her horse curvet and prance more than ever, as though he, too, began to relish the joke that was eclipsing the sport of the day. Arabella, in despair, grew limp with fear. Wo horse! Good horse! Steady! Steady! All the prayers that a virtuous maid-of-honour of eighteen might be expected to remember rose to her lips, but prayers availed not. If a maid-of-honour of eighteen ever swears when faced by the dire emergency of her life, perhaps her heart fluttered a swear, but oaths, too, were unavailing. The Furies had

entered the brute. Out went his nose, and, gathering himself together for the final effort of his memorable performance, he was off like an arrow.

Bravely now Arabella! Sit tight and invoke your patron saint, for this is a race with the devil himself, and if you fail history will hand it down for ever.

The girl led the field at a flying gallop, with the laughing courtiers spurring at her heels, and goading her horse to his topmost speed with the clatter of their headlong charge. It was a short race. Arabella was too scared to faint, and, screaming as wildly as though a mouse were at play about her ankles, she fell or threw herself from the saddle. There she lay on the turf, frightened out of her wits but unhurt, in a plight that only sisters of charity, or at any rate only ladies, should have witnessed. But no sisters of charity were there, only Court fops and damsels, with James careering at their head. Soon the whole gay company arrived on the scene, to discover James at the side of the prostrate maid lending her assistance. . . . The lady's distress melted the heart of the Prince. And hers was not stone to his kindness. Her horse had cruelly betrayed her; and there was no more sport at the expense of Arabella, for her lover was the King's heir.

Such is the story in some measure of how it

came to pass that when James ascended the Throne the Churchills found themselves basking in the favour of the Sovereign, and enjoying the Princess Anne's unbounded friendship and confidence.

The Princess's household at the Cockpit was indeed the fortalice of this rising family. It was an extra-territorial preserve, within which their supremacy was unchallenged. The dignity of Anne's position was proportionately enhanced when James became King, and her new honours were reflected in her household. Her old friend, Sarah Jennings, now, of course, Sarah Churchill, was made first lady of the bed-chamber to the Princess, and her husband, Jack Churchill, was raised to the English peerage. Arabella had cemented the foundations of her family's fortunes by yielding to James; Sarah, her sister-in-law, by never yielding in anything to any earthly power, completed the edifice of its greatness.

The progress of Sarah to the Cockpit from the old manor house at Richmond, where we saw her nigh two decades ago playing with the little orphan princesses and the Villiers children, had been a series of triumphal campaigns. From babyhood she was the insuppressible, the indomitable Sarah. Her first appointment at Court was as maid-of-honour to Mary of

Modena at St. James's Palace, where her mother had quarters as a Royal *protégée*. The little maid was pert and handsome, and her precocious airs were vastly entertaining to her Royal mistress and her Court. She had a glib tongue that was surprisingly critical and bitter too, and a spirit for which fear had no existence. Kings and princes, lords and ladies, might be very great personages indeed, but before never a one did little Sarah quail. At ten she had the courage of a soldier, at fifteen she had spirit enough to lead the King's army or give the law to His Majesty's realm. Her mother—a lady whom the literature of the day does not always depict in attractive colours—was desirous at this time of withdrawing her from the York household. Perhaps her motives did her honour, perhaps she thought the establishment of a Catholic prince an unworthy setting for talents so brilliant! But whether the widow was agitated by maternal anxiety or reasons more sordid mattered little, for Sarah had already taken the future into her own strong hands. There was a battle-royal, in which the unconventional young baggage proved herself too much for the distressed widow, who not only lost her cause, but likewise lost her rooms in the palace, with so pathetic a story did Sarah excite in her own favour the sympathy of her Royal patrons.

Born to conquer, Sarah soon marched into the lists of love, not, however, taking as an example for imitation the frail Arabella. On that score her mother need have had no anxiety: Sarah was born for greater things than to be the plaything of any creature, however exalted his rank. She might condescend to share a prince's throne, but never affections that would have conferred a more invidious distinction. Like an ever-victorious general, proud and confident, she surveyed the field of operations, and then mapped out the plan of campaign which she would carry to a successful issue, or die of chagrin. Such a spirit was invincible, and so, having vanquished all her rivals, handsome Jack Churchill fell to her lot, the prize of war. Than this conquest of hers there was no more promising soldier, no luckier favourite of fortune.

There were two days in Jack Churchill's life when a false move would have meant the dropping of the portcullis right in his teeth, the portcullis guarding the way to the giddy heights of fortune to which he at length attained. One was that on which he asked Sarah to be his wife and ally. The other crisis belonged to that early chapter in his career when he was a page to James, Duke of York. One day the page attended his master at a military review.

"What would you like to be?" said the

Prince to the youngster, guessing, no doubt, what his answer would be, for what boy's heart would not leap to be a soldier at the spectacle of columns of infantry, their fixed bayonets glinting in the sunshine, advancing blithely to the rollicking music of their bands! And then at the clarion notes of the trumpet ringing high into the sky, the thunderous charge of the cavalry, with sabres glistening along the hurricane-line, like palisades of steel!

At the moment of the Prince's question the Horse Guards galloped past. They gave Jack his inspiration. He would be a guardsman. Oh but to carry a colour amongst these gallant fellows!

The boy's prayer was heard. His answer delighted the Prince, and he got his commission.

The young officer of the Guards literally vaulted from grade to grade. He could not help himself. His sister Arabella, thanks to her adventure in the hunting-field, enjoyed the favour of one whose patronage might insure promotion for an officer less competent to advance his own interests than this young Guardsman. His progress was handicapped neither by an obtrusive conscience nor an excessive sensibility on the point of honour. The ladies smiled on Jack, and Jack smiled back for a consideration. They repaid his condescension with more than maternal



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tenderness. The Duchess of Cleveland turned from the King to the Guards officer, and the young warrior so far consented to indulge her passion for self-sacrifice as to accept from her a gift of five thousand pounds. This high standard of generosity he would do nothing to alloy, for when the Duchess asked him for twenty guineas, her funds running low at basset, Jack refused, with that sweetness of manner which still left her his debtor! The five thousand pounds was not, however, earned without some slight risk to the gentleman who, though brave, was deeply appreciative, and not without substantial reasons, of the worth of his own person. King Charles discovered the Duchess of Cleveland one day with a lover. Without waiting to encounter the Merrie Monarch's anger or raillery, his rival leaped through the window. The gallant who acquitted himself with such agile discretion is supposed to have been Churchill. He did not, however, escape altogether unscathed, his punishment taking the form of a stinging insult.

"Since you have become her lover to escape from starving, I forgive you!" said the King, and Jack was preserved from similar instances of the Royal clemency by being sent to Tangier, which seems to have been the Hades of unwise lovers.

It was in the panoply of a full colonel that Jack one evening fluttered the hearts of maids

and dames at a rout at St. James's Palace; and who should cast an imperious eye on the dashing warrior but young Mistress Jennings herself!

Jack, distributing with the nice discrimination of a business man, his glances and compliments and the hundred-and-one attentions that were the stock-in-trade of his flourishing commerce, caught Sarah's eye. When these two looked full upon each other—both handsome, both audacious, he a giant in intellect, she a giantess in spirit—it was as when the lightning courses through the air, and one wonders if it is the gods at play or the gods at war.

"A fine young thing that! Pity she's as poor as a church mouse!" doubtless thought Jack, unbending, perchance, so far as to smile upon a person who, in his opinion, was of as little moment as a palace kitten.

"Conceited coxcomb!" thought Sarah. "But, lord, what a face! What a figure! The eye! The waist! . . . the devil!" and Sarah could have slapped the colonel's face that he was not at her feet, begging her hand in marriage, and imploring forgiveness for having ever yielded to the blandishments of that wretched Cleveland.

"There's Catharine Sedley," said Jack to himself, "with the fortune of a Jewess, and as ugly as sin. If only Mistress Sarah had half Catharine's ravishing purse to set off her loveliness!"

But Sarah won the colonel in spite of the gold of all her rivals, and despite her own poverty. James looked on them both as in some sense his own children, for Jack was the brother of his devoted Arabella, whose proofs of affection were multiplying, if somewhat irregularly, the branches of the Royal Family, while Sarah's happiness he desired, because of the indomitable maid herself. And so the union took place of this extraordinary pair, who, having joined forces in matrimonial treaty, turned adamantine hearts to all the world. Henceforth, though divinely selfish in their greed for wealth and power, they loved each other with touching constancy, through every temptation and trial, to the end.

From the time of their marriage the history of the Churchills is not alone closely interwoven with that of Anne. Theirs, indeed, largely shaped the Princess's career. Almost from her cradle Sarah's was the imperious will which to Anne was ever the decisive influence, saving her as child, and girl, and woman, from the trouble of exercising an independent judgment.

By her alliance with one of the most engaging personalities in England, Sarah's place in the esteem of Anne became more firmly established than ever. Lord Chesterfield, who knew Churchill well, describes him as being irresistible either by man or woman. Devoid of

From an engraving by J. J. Van der Berghe.

ARABELLA CHURCHILL.

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principle, he wound his way into the confidence of all sorts and conditions of people by his strong sense, his gracious manner, and his perfect temper, a temper which reigned serene in pellucid Olympian altitudes, which were never overcast, even though Sarah herself flounced round him in her wildest tantrums of rage.

At the Cockpit George of Denmark was an amiable nonentity, loyal to his wife, and exulting in the quality and quantity of the wine. The worthy Dane had no wisdom with which to help his wife in the difficulties which she created for herself by dabbling in the turgid stream of political intrigue. Denied the guidance which would have been hers had she been more happily mated, the Princess yielded herself up to Sarah Churchill's thraldom.

She was the ruler of the Princess's household, the ruler not only of the household, but of the very heart and soul of the daughter of the King. No father-confessor ever knew more intimately the aspirations of his penitent's bosom than did Sarah those of her mistress. To her the mind of Anne was as an open book ; no wonder, for the book was largely of her own making.

King James on his throne was as confident of the loyalty of the Churchills as he was of his own life. Across his mind no thought ever flashed that in showering honours upon them he

was strengthening the fortifications of treason. The Cockpit, he would have sworn, was the very citadel of devotion to his Crown. But the masterful intellects which dominated the Princess's household were already shaping splendid dreams, already they were beholding visions, and in their dreams and visions the poor Princess, who was their minion, was queen, and high up in the very zenith shone their own resplendent star.

Spurred on by that unlovely ambition which at the dawn of things made Heaven itself the theatre of war, and brought to the depths the rebel angels, the Churchills cared nothing for King James, to whom they owed everything; nothing for Anne, who trusted them in everything. When the dread day of reckoning came for James he called confidently for the man whose fortune he had made, for the idol of the Cockpit. . . . Where was Churchill . . . Churchill . . . !

Out of the silence there came the clatter of horses' hoofs, a clatter that grew fainter and fainter till there was dead silence, and that was answer enough. The Churchills, as we shall presently see, had turned their backs on the darksome night, on the angry sky, on the murmurings of the coming tempest.

But we anticipate. Fate, the master-smith,

who, on the hunting-green, to the music of the laughter of dames and gallants, had long ago fashioned the bonds that made James the slave of the Churchills, had not as yet sought the red forge of tragedy, gaping through Cimmerian night, where the King's Crown was to be welded into a coronet of affliction, and his Queen sent forth to exile, a Queen of Tears.

## CHAPTER VIII

"WHAT relation are you to 'lying Killigrew'?" said a gentleman to Harry Killigrew, one of the gayest of that crowded gallery of gay sparks who flourished during the closing decades of the Stuart epoch.

Harry smiled pleasantly, for nothing came amiss to him that his lively imagination could possibly construe into a jest, and what was coined for a withering insult was blithely transmuted into the virgin gold of playful humour.

"Sir," he replied, "there is no distinction in our family: we are all liars; my father was a liar, my uncles were liars, and I myself am a very great liar; but I suppose you mean my cousin Will, who never spoke one word of truth!"

Harry's panegyric might have embraced contemporary personages of far greater consideration than any members of his gifted family; and to none, perhaps, might it have been applied more justly than to Robert, Earl of Sunderland. This brilliant and cold-blooded intriguer takes rank amongst the most consummate actors that ever

played a decisive part in the turning-point of a nation's affairs.

Sunderland it was who made everything possible by making the King absolutely impossible. He was the very prince of opportunists, to whom his master's smile or his master's frown was the single principle in statecraft that, admitting of no dispute, was at once final and comprehensive, the beginning and the end of reason, and justice, and policy. To him there was no right and no wrong. There was only, on the one hand, the luxury of power, and, on the other, the sepulchral desolation of obscurity. If in Courts there be no sincerity, then must the ideal courtier be dubbed "Sunderland." But with such gracious subtlety, such perfection of word and of mien, did he carry himself, that upon the mind of James no shadow of suspicion ever fell that this urbane mentor was not a paragon of fidelity.

Sunderland had a fascination to which few of his contemporaries were impervious. If people did not often love him, they marvelled at him. It was a fascination that could not blind any discerning judge to his deficiencies in all that should go to the composition of a great and noble character. James's confidence in Sunderland remained, indeed, proof conclusive of his inability to estimate men according to their deserts. He surrendered himself with child-like

confidence to the magnetism of one whose god was the sun that was shining. That same magnetism drove the Princess Anne to distraction. With nothing but intuition to guide her, she jumped instinctively to a fairly accurate estimate of this dazzling personage. But while she hated him and his Countess it was for reasons very different from those for which honest men must censure them. She herself was in her heart a traitress, but her loathing for Sunderland was not due to the fact that he too was steeped to the lips in treason. On the contrary, she believed him to be loyal from motives of self-interest, and her bitterness against him sprang from the success with which he acted the part of the whole-hearted and zealous servant of the Crown.

At times she must have feared that Sunderland's talents would defeat all the King's enemies, defeat the King's indiscretions, and ultimately accomplish the miracle of defeating the man's own insincerity, by achieving the triumph of James's policy. Such thoughts stung her to madness; and voices were near to ensure that they would never long be absent from her mind. Did she speak, the conversation veered round to Sunderland; did she write, her pen spontaneously traced his name; and during those lonely hours when conscience and natural affection and ambition made war within her soul, the face of

Sunderland haunted her misery, smiling on her confusion an inscrutable smile.

A host of enemies stoutly opposed James's policy. But the direst enemy of them all was Sunderland, who posed as the enthusiastic supporter of his Sovereign's policy, and who, to attain his own ends, lent to the King's most indiscreet measures his fatal countenance. James was sincere in his religion, though, unhappily, as imprudent as he was sincere. Sunderland's religion was, on the contrary, known only to himself and Omniscience ; but in zeal for the advancement of the ancient faith he was his Sovereign's devoted servant, and with a light heart he gave His Majesty a cordial hand along the road to ruin. His own continuance in place and power was the motive which inspired his counsels, sublime selfishness the spirit which prompted his advice in the Council-chamber. When the wind blew Catholic, the Heavens be praised ! When the wind blew Protestant, the Heavens be praised ! Praise under all circumstances to Allah, who had made fools to be the salvation of clever men ! When the most delicate weather-cock ever designed was baffled by current and counter-current the equanimity of one mind was a marvel : it was that of Robert, Earl of Sunderland. In the whole gamut of politics there was no move that could disconcert one who was always ready

to disarm evil fortune with the insinuating smile of surprised delight. Plain men distrusted him, dull men were afraid of him, honourable men despised him. But when Robert thought it worth his while to inspire the plain men with confidence, to reassure the dull ones, or to ingratiate himself with men of honour, by sheer address he vanquished all obstacles.

Sharp is the contrast between what Sunderland was and what he ought to have been according to all the laws of heredity: for while in his blood there coursed the strain of a Bayard he has left behind the record of an unscrupulous adventurer. His father was a chivalrous country gentleman, who bade farewell to his delightful home to fight and die for his King, and leave in widowhood the lovely Saccharissa immortalised by the poet Waller. His brief married life was an idyll, his letters from camp and battlefield to his wife continuing a simple and exquisite romance of cultivated society in rural England which only ended with his life. At the battle of Newbury he fell, fighting on the side of the Cavaliers, and his little son Robert inherited a great name and splendid fortune. In Robert blended all the qualities that made his father and mother so pleasing to their contemporaries. He was handsome, gracious of manner, gallant in bearing, while his intellectual accomplishments

were in keeping with a personality so engaging. Years of travel abroad had made him familiar with French, Spanish, and Italian. Contact with the best society of the leading European capitals had polished to the finest edge wits naturally keen; and what he did not learn of men and affairs in the ordinary course was acquired at the gaming tables, where he bartered his broad acres for the crooked wisdom garnered amongst professional sharpers.

Robert at Oxford was a leader in one of the theological camps. He captained a troop of undergraduates, who tore to rags the surplices worn by the students of Christ Church at the command of Charles II. Opposition to what they considered Romanising tendencies may have fired some of his comrades to this exploit, but the pure fires of Protestant zeal were in Robert's case enlivened by sheer devilry. Robert of Oxford was the same wayward Robert who, having brightened the salons of Paris and Madrid with his elegant presence, returned to London to fall in love with Anne, daughter of the Earl of Bristol. Anne was a lovely girl, and Robert, fascinated by her, stooped to conquer, and did so with such dash and address that soon the beauty struck her colours and capitulated to the courtly young noble. But Robert was courtly and caressing only at discretion, as Bristol's

daughter quickly learned, in a way that must have provoked her to rage, the more maddening because it could be gratified only at her own expense. There was a lovers' quarrel at the eleventh hour, and Robert, as a declaration of independence, rode away. Whither was he gone? The noble house of Sunderland was ashamed of its master's treachery. The noble house of Bristol was struck with consternation; but in the midst of the commotion, back to his lady-love hied the truant. There were forgiveness and a wedding, and Saccharissa had a daughter-in-law beautiful as she herself had been, but less discreet than fair. Before the wedding it was Robert's privilege to play the careless gallant, reckless of the favour of the damsel too lightly won. But after the wedding it was madame's day to play the gallant and tame the bold Robert who had tattered the surplices at Christ Church.

Entering politics, Sunderland became one of Charles's ministers, and distinguished himself as an enemy of James's succession. He did his best to prevail upon Charles to support the measures designed to divert the succession from his brother in favour of the Prince of Orange. James knew the whole story of base intrigue, but, with an excess of generosity for which he afterwards paid dearly, he forgave Sunderland when he came to the throne, and gave him a place in his Government.

But for Sunderland it should be the highest place or none at all; and thus began that subterranean war in which, with fair faces and black hearts, the Earl and his Countess would have carried off the palm for deceit, had it not been for the Princess Anne, who, alas! must be awarded the distinction, by reason of the ties of blood which multiplied the darkness of her sin.

It matters little whether Sunderland ever really intended to serve James with whatever selfish loyalty his nature possessed. To him the best king was the king under whom he fared best; and as the circumstances of the time seemed to offer every promise of dazzling reward to his talents for intrigue, he doubtless accepted the secretaryship in James's administration with earnest wishes for the prosperity of himself and the King.

To promote the first and dearest of these objects he desired to exchange his own comparatively modest post for that of Lord Treasurer, an office filled by James's brother-in law, Lord Rochester. To forward his schemes he chose as his chief instrument a whole-hearted partisan of the monarch, and one who, whatever his faults may have been—and they were hardly as black or as numerous as his enemies would have us believe—was yet adorned to the end by loyalty to the King.

Dick Talbot, Duke of Tyrconnel, was a rake of the type that might have stepped out of the pages of Lever. He was brave as a lion, ready to die for his friends or dispatch his foes, always willing to fall in love with a fair maid, and more disposed to make the favoured one his wife than many of his associates. Amidst the pleasures and distractions of the life of a Court rake, he never forgot the miseries of his own suffering country, and many an Irish gentleman ground to the dust by the Penal Laws, was glad to pour his misfortunes into Dick's ear, in the hope of securing through his intercession the clemency of the Crown. Dick's heart was tender, and what interest he possessed was always employed to help his unfortunate countrymen. But Dick's pocket was also deep, and it is alleged against him that he gratefully accepted douceurs for his philanthropy. It is not asserted against him, however, that he ever took money for evil-doing, as in the case of either Sunderland, his colleague and chief, or his brother-in-law, Jack Churchill. Nor, as in the case of Sunderland and Churchill, did he in the day of trial change his coat, and turn his face from the setting sun to where the new day would dawn.

Of the corps of devil-may-care gallants who made the days of the Restoration race merrily

by in one whirl of love-making, gambling, and revelry, there was none more picturesque than Dick Talbot. His princely air, his majestic bearing, his joyous, reckless spirit, his Celtic swagger captured James's fancy, and secured the admiration of the courtiers, who approved those of his faults in which they themselves were participators, and envied him the others which the devil had denied them.

The beautiful Frances Jennings, sister of Sarah Churchill, was Talbot's wife. There was, therefore, a certain indirect connection between the Princess Anne's establishment and that of Sunderland, which, though it did not foster cordial relations between the two houses, and was doubtless not intended to do so, nevertheless had its weight with the crafty Earl in drawing Talbot into his schemes. But he was not by any means dependent on his wife for the deference shown him by the designing Sunderland. He was master of an income of about forty thousand a year, no insignificant recommendation to a man who prized gold at its full worth, and who was nearly always in need of money, despite his magnificent patrimony. In a hundred ways, one at least being of a despicable nature, Talbot had shown in earlier days his devotion to James, who, now that he was King, was well disposed to reward loyalty so fervent.

But perhaps his crowning qualification for Sunderland's friendship, or rather to be his instrument, was a certain blustering ingenuousness which made his thoughts clear as noonday to one endowed with the astuteness necessary to read them. Talbot's enormous wealth, his religion, his nationality, his place in the King's esteem, his relationship to the Churchills, his want of discretion, his leonine daring, his exclusively Irish ambitions, all furnished reasons more or less cogent for the confidence reposed in him by Sunderland.

The Earldom of Tyrconnel had already been conferred on him by the King as a token of his favour. To be Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland was, however, the ideal that dominated Talbot's dreams ; and even this dream, perhaps, he would never have dreamt, but for the inspiration of the lovely Jennings, whom he had won after a courtship as chequered as that of the famous Charles O'Malley himself.

The impressionable Dick first met the beautiful Frances at the time when she had become renowned for her virtue by showering around St. James's Palace unopened love-letters. They were from no less a personage than Dick's Royal friend and patron, James. Whoever liked could read the billets-doux, and soon the whole Court was laughing at the Prince's confusion. To

Talbot such extraordinary virtue allied with so much beauty was irresistible. Bless the colleen, and be hanged to the Prince: he would make her his wife!

Dick's eagerness cost him temporarily, under circumstances to be presently sketched, the treasure he coveted, and when it was too late, he had reason to curse his folly in not conducting the attack with more finesse. The ardour of his love-making repelled the austere beauty. As yet she had not the key to a temperament changeful as the skies of his native land. His high spirits when fortune seemed to shine upon his suit wearied her. His impatience of rivalry was fatal to his prospects, because adulation was the homage she saw paid on every side to beauty; and why should she be denied her share of incense so seductive? In miniature this love-suit was a replica of the historical duel of Celt and Saxon. The man surrendered himself absolutely to the passion that possessed him; the woman was afraid of so tremendous a sacrifice, it was so foreign to her easier nature, so unlike the fine subdivision of loyalty and affection which on all sides marked the relation of the lover and his mistress. One day it was war, the next peace. Talbot turned in umbrage from jests which his English rivals would have taken with uplifted eyebrows, or gay

repartee, according to the quality of the gentleman's temperament or wit. A gentle word or inviting smile, and the beauty was as quickly forgiven, only, however, to be as quickly condemned to see the thunder on his brow at some fresh evidence of her vanity or indifference. It was inimitable comedy with, as one might say, two endings, one a little amusing, a little sad ; the other, the final one, wholly Celtic in its poetry, Celtic in its sadness, Celtic in its irreparable desolation and ruin !

## CHAPTER IX

TO the Stuarts a flirtation was often as momentous as a great campaign to other dynasties. It was in some degree a long and intricate series of love affairs, other people's love affairs, that eventually raised Anne Stuart to the dignity of the Queen of England.

In hastening the downfall of James and the elevation of the Princess, Dick Talbot was an unconscious but a powerful agent, and his companion in the vaulting ambition that marked the day of his prosperity was his wife, Frances Jennings, the heroine of one of those Court flirtations which might almost rank as affairs of State. In its day that flirtation was the delight of London, and even now its history clothes with something of the animation of rival lovers important personages in Anne's circle.

The heart had no place in the schemes of Sunderland. He was a traitor because fidelity was not in his nature. Talbot and Sunderland had for colleagues in the committee formed by

James as a sort of secret cabinet to which might be confided his most secret aspirations, Father Petre and Henry Jermyn, afterwards Lord Dover. These four plotted and planned, they coquetted with the whirlwind, and airily challenged giants, one with an eye to this advantage, another with an eye to that, but all in the end that what was to be should be that Anne might rule and rue. These men hardly gave the Princess at the Cockpit a thought. She had neither a party in the State nor the means of forming one, nor yet a husband capable of leading one, and if she was not forgotten altogether it was because of her religion.

The King idolised the Princess Anne. However earnestly he may have desired that she should change her faith, he nevertheless repelled with vehemence the faintest suggestion of proselytism in regard to her. He relished theological disputation as keenly as did his grandfather, and was willing that Sunderland, Rochester, and the rest, should vex their souls, if not their consciences, in wrangles with casuists, whose point of view their life-long habit of mind rendered them hopelessly incapable of appreciating. But Anne, whose conversion would have been more precious to him than all the gold in the Treasury of France, he would not suffer to be perplexed with such problems. In a letter

to Père la Chase, Father Petre wrote that the King's religious advisers

"one day combined together to induce the King to confer with his daughter Anne about religion, saying: How would any one be of their faith when their heirs were Protestants? The King requested them to leave his daughters to him, and to mind their own concerns."

A gem of pure comedy is enshrined in the same letter in the form of an allusion to Prince George, which shows that the muddle-headed Dane was in some sense the despair of the King and his spiritual guides. All attempts to show him the error of his ways produced the same effect as if a spruce master of Italian fence, in cambric shirt and velvet breeches, tried to engage with delicate rapier a giant, cased in armour from head to heel. The result was exquisitely ludicrous. The man in steel could not hurt his assailant so lithe of foot and agile in defence; but, on the other hand, the finest blade ever forged could not penetrate the giant's cuirass. "He is a prince," wrote Petre, "with whom I cannot discourse of religion. Luther was never more in earnest than Prince George. It is for this reason that King James, who loves not to be denied, never has pressed him in that matter."

Anne and the Prince were therefore excluded from the circle of the King's apostleship. The

lady, however, possessed the gift of creating grievances for herself out of the figments of her imagination. In this way she professed to anticipate persecution because of her religion. The notion was a triumph of perverse ingenuity and demonstrated how ill-disposed was Anne to do justice to her unfortunate father. There was not a shadow of foundation for her fears. As a child he had handed her over to Protestant tutors; as a young girl she had enjoyed the fullest liberty to practise her religion. When James's family were in exile in Brussels, in the heart of a Catholic land, neither he nor Mary of Modena ever dreamt of taking advantage of her isolation to shake her religious convictions.

Nevertheless Anne pretended to fear that as a married lady, living in the public eye at the Cockpit, surrounded by comforts provided by her father, the freedom of conscience permitted her under directly opposite conditions would be withdrawn in favour of moral suasion, if not of the rack and thumbscrew.

Deep grief, however, weighed upon the King by reason of Anne's adherence to the Established Church. Earnest, well-nigh to the point of fanaticism, how could he but desire with passionate intensity that one he loved should be on the side he was confident was right? But while his affection made him long for her conversion,

it raised up at the same time an insurmountable barrier against any measures which could occasion her distress. He probably hoped that in the long run the force of example would influence her more powerfully than an appeal to her intellect; for at her father's accession, and during the succeeding years, she saw men of position and ability one by one give their adhesion to the ancient faith.

In the case of a young woman governed by her emotions, nothing could be more natural than that she should follow such a lead, and adopt a course rendered fashionable by the King and Queen, a course which the conduct of men of talent approved as reasonable, and that of astute statesmen confirmed as politic. And turning from the living to the dead, and from the seventeenth to the earlier centuries, zealots on the King's side would cite the example of the great Saxons, and Normans, and Plantagenets, to sustain her should she turn to the Bishop of Rome for guidance in matters of faith; while the example of France was before her eyes to prove that unity of faith might mean implacable hostility in politics, for Louis Quatorze, a bigoted Catholic, had for his enemy the Pope, while that model Lutheran, William of Orange, her cousin and brother-in-law, was actually fighting the battles of the Papacy.

To a mind, however, indisposed to decisive action, it is always more agreeable to remain at rest than to move, and it is this quality of heroic inertia which probably preserved Anne to the Church of England, more especially as it harmonised with the prejudices which passed for convictions in the case of Prince George, and, what was more important still, commanded the approval of the Churchills, the real autocrats of the Cockpit.

How little logical is human nature, even when its whole strength of purpose is concentrated on a single aim, is illustrated by the honours paid to Anne when she worshipped at the Royal chapels. At Whitehall she attended in State the services of the Church of England, and while the King knelt at Mass before a Catholic altar praying for her conversion, and reflected with pain that in the most sacred things of life he was widely separated from the child so dear to him, the Princess, when attending chapel, was by his orders accorded the same honours as if she were Sovereign of England. This was the fashion in which the doting father persecuted his child, hugging to his soul, no doubt, the delusion that he knew Anne, gentle, yielding Anne, so unassuming and naïve, the very lady, as he thought, to be touched by those chivalrous attentions which subdue the affections and conquer through the heart.

To her he looked as the ultimate heir to the Throne, and he probably solaced himself with the thought that the Princess's talents and inclinations were not of the order to attempt another revolution in the nation's beliefs, if at her accession she should find the most potent influences in English life in unity once more with Latin Christendom. Her temperament, he argued, was one to acquiesce in facts, and her policy in religion, as in other matters, would follow the line of least resistance.

He could base no fond illusions of the kind on Mary's future. Nothing was more unlikely than that she should ever forsake Protestantism. When very young she had left her father's home for Holland, and there had fallen under the iron dominion of a gloomy and austere sect, a dominion from which for her there could be no emancipation. No wife ever more devotedly put off all the attachments of childhood, of home, and of country, than did she, making her husband her idol, his people her people, and his faith her own. Having cheerfully made every sacrifice demanded of her, both her lord and her fate were alike obdurate to the unhappy Princess. Her husband could spare her but few crumbs of affection, and to fill her arms and bless her loneliness, there came no child.

Heavy as was this cross to Mary, to James it

must have seemed in some degree a just visitation on the House that had plagued him with so many anxieties, anxieties from which he could find no refuge either as duke or king. If, therefore, Mary and William should succeed him, their reign would be, as it were, but an interregnum, after which his beloved Anne would succeed her childless sister. By that time, with the help of Heaven, she would be a Catholic and her children likewise, and should her children fail, the next heirs were his Catholic nieces, the daughters of his dead sister, Henrietta of Orleans. So the King in his cabinet mapped out the future of England, and so in all likelihood would it have been, but for the Royal architect himself, who, in emergencies that called for a Richelieu, was never more than his father's son, never more truly a Stuart than when to be a Stuart was the certain avenue to ruin.

While James was risking his Crown for his religion, and his soul for his mistress, Sunderland, as we have seen, was directing his schemes towards supplanting Rochester in the Lord Treasureship. Father Petre was working for his Church with more zeal than judgment, and his Sovereign was demanding in vain as his reward from the Pope, a cardinal's hat. One can easily see reason for the employment of these men on a board, the existence of which, was an in-

vitation to ruin. But it must remain a puzzle why even James II., who was so ingenuous in his choice of advisers, should have included Henry Jermyn on this ill-starred conclave—Jermyn, the villain of the love story which had long ago made the beautiful Jennings the idol of the town.

Anne would have special reasons for curiosity concerning Henry Jermyn. Her interest would have the usual Stuart motive. Her cousin by marriage, the beautiful Theodosia Hyde, wife of Clarendon's son, had fallen headlong in love with Henry. Never were a coxcomb's ravages amongst the hearts of the fair more inexplicable than his. Theodosia was remarkable for her loveliness in an age more critical of female charms than any England had ever before seen. Yet she lost her heart to a professional fop without either majesty of bearing or grace of form, but with conceit enough to match the beauty of an Adonis and the talents of a Sunderland. His physique was rather diminutive. But Jermyn was not taught modesty by his stature. If affectation could clothe with an air of bravery a gentleman whose appearance was only commonplace, then could Jermyn hold his own with the handsomest gallants of the Court. But alas for the impotence of merely wishing to be beautiful! Jermyn only made himself ridiculous

to eyes keen enough to relish his rebellion against the decrees of incompetent nature.

That the coxcomb had plenty of courage was proved in a duel about the infamous Lady Shrewsbury, which nearly cost him his life. And that he was bold and stubborn was shown in other adventures. But it was not by flood or field that Henry sought the path to glory and advancement. As one of James's special favourites, and a member of the secret committee of four, the prize he set before himself was, of all others, the captaincy of the Lifeguards! Of old he had indeed threatened to go forth to meet death on the stricken field, but that was under circumstances exquisitely absurd, circumstances which had brought him into antagonism with Talbot, as his rival for the favour of Frances Jennings.

Jermyn had been banished from Court by Charles II., whose pride was hurt at the favours shown him by one of the most indulgent of courtesans. Charles, however, was soon tired of war with the lady, and on the conclusion of a treaty of peace the woebegone Henry was granted permission to return from his exile to bask in the agreeable temptations of the Court. But other people were proud as well as the King; and "le petit Henri," rather than be moved about like a pawn on a chessboard, though it were to please a king, retired to his

place in the country, and there set up as a philosopher amongst neighbours who were filled with admiration at the wisdom of a recluse thus calmly resigned to pastoral solitude, after revelling in the vanity of the gayest of Courts.

From his hermitage Jermyn at length sallied forth to subdue the charming Frances Jennings, whose radiant beauty had already enslaved the reckless Talbot. Frances, in the days of her peerless youth, was the jewel of the maids-of-honour, her scornful laughter ever making silvery music, to which the humour in her glorious eyes sparkled in rhythm. This was the bird that Jermyn came to town to snare and destroy; the bird that Talbot wished to make the idol of his life.

Here then was a battle for a fair ladye, a battle between pigmy and giant. It was David and Goliath over again, met as duellists on the field of love, where the weapons were the uncertain things that captivate a woman's fancy. The precise Jermyn and the swaggering Talbot were soon the joy of the whole Court, never more elated than when a contest for a lady's favour blazed into rivalry so fierce that every eye could behold the sport of the conflagration.

The Count de Grammont says that Jermyn's motive in returning to Court was to bring dishonour on Frances, and embellish with her

spotless name the roll of those who had fallen victims to his elusive fascinations. One who had discomfited the King anticipated little difficulty in effecting this gallant enterprise. The bold Jermyn began his attack with the address and audacity of the ever-victorious lady-killer. Virtue personified as Frances, and a dandified Mephistopheles as Henry, played together, while the Court looked on and laughed at the game, which boded ruin for the one who had all to lose in this pastime so enchanting.

As Jermyn had never seen the girl before his dismissal from Court, if he returned with the special object of besieging her virtue, he could offer no excuse in palliation of his sinister designs. Talbot, who loved the young maid-of-honour devotedly and ardently, and coveted the privilege of making her his wife, must have been beside himself with jealousy if he suspected the shameful prospect which his rival is said to have conceived. The ravishing Frances behaved in the midst of this fierce warfare for her heart with the weakness of a woman and the strength of a Jennings of the race of the inimitable Sarah. The delicious excitement of the fray thrilled her. Eyes, ever bright, shone now with added brilliancy.

While Jermyn and Talbot were the Richmonds of the field, many another heart panted sad and sore from wounds inflicted by the heroine's deadly

glances. In the intoxication of girlish vanity she fell in love with the wrong man; but while giving Jermyn her heart to lacerate, of the priceless treasure of her honour neither vanity nor passion could rob her. Then the comedy became suddenly sad, and the pomp of forces joining battle was eclipsed in the turmoil that presaged defeat and victory, victory and defeat.

The invincible beau tarried long about asking the maid-of-honour to be his wife. These at first were days of sweet uncertainty for the girl. The beau was shy because he dare not tempt fortune! Poor trembling knight, fearful to hear his doom decreed for ever! So the maid deluded and flattered herself. She looked in her mirror, and what she saw there satisfied her. Nature had moulded her divinely fair, with charms which Nature alone can express, and she only when in a moment of boundless prodigality she sends forth youth, radiantly lovely, from her warm embrace.

Enamoured of herself, how could she believe that her favoured lover's designs were ignoble? But at length came disillusionment. His visits grew less frequent, his wit less scintillating, because the lover had failed to prepare his discourse for the entertainment of his mistress. The dream of love was dead. The maid-of-honour had never before tasted the bitterness of such humiliation. Oh! that first crushing dis-

appointment of the dearest hopes of girlhood. Could walls but speak, there was a chamber within the Palace that tales might tell of a disconsolate maiden's grief, of heart-broken sobs and floods of tears that filled the night with mourning, while all around her slept soundly the gay companions of her waking hours. Was there ever a girl more unfortunate, ever one more foolish! Thus wailed Frances when all alone before Heaven she laid aside the mask of pride, and the airs of the gay coquette who never a scar had received in the tourney of love. For how could Frances know that her story was as old as the world, and that every night, in every land, the eyes of beauty were red with weeping for the folly she too late lamented, the folly of giving her heart too soon!

Jermyn, eager to escape from the dilemma in which his impudence had placed him without ruining his reputation as a man of breeding, volunteered to accompany an expedition to the coast of Guinea. The final scene between the pair was an ideal morsel of Court comedy. Enough of this leave-taking has been handed down to enable us to imagine the rest.

"Farewell, Mistress Jennings!" said Henry with a sigh, as though he were the most miserable of men at being banished from her presence, perhaps for ever.

From an engraving after the painting by Verelst.

THE BEAUTIFUL FRANCES JENNINGS (DUCHESS OF TYRCONNEL).

p. 134.

"Farewell, Master Jermyn!" cried the maid right merrily, laughter in her eyes if not in her voice. "But why so sad going forth to this splendid adventure over the ocean to the Coast of Gold? The thought of it warms my woman's heart. In my veins I feel the mysterious call of the African wilds. If I were but a soldier!" And she stamped her little foot as if she would hear a martial spur jingle on her heel and a sword rattle at her side.

Henry shrugged his shoulders as though volumes could not tell the story of his consuming passion, and the dejection of spirit in which he was leaving England, and alas! leaving her.

"Thou railest, beauty," murmured the coxcomb, his tactics thrown into confusion by persiflage when he had rehearsed the part with tears.

"Pray, Master Jermyn," pleaded Frances mockingly, "pardon a poor maid-of-honour if she cannot find tears for your happy fortune, if she cannot repine at the laurels that invite you far away . . . even though she must stay behind."

All the scorn and mockery died out of her voice as she uttered the last words. They came slowly and painfully, almost in a whisper, and with half-averted head, lest her melting eyes and the trembling of her sweet lips should betray the fulness of her heart.

Jermyn had acted a leading part in too many tender scenes to be deceived. His courage rose. Hope stormed his breast. Was the ice-maiden thawing? Ineffable delight. Had he stumbled on victory along the line of defeat?

He coined on the spur of the moment the best excuse he could for the sudden passion that had seized him for African adventure.

"No excuses," she answered, with a ringing laugh and eyes innocent of a trace of grief in their violent merriment. "You have already," she went on gaily, "made captives of so many that you do right to go in search of fresh laurels and foreign conquests."

Henry was speechless. It was indeed time for retreat without waiting to study appearances, and call it an advance.

"I trust," she added, warming to her part with spirit worthy of Sarah's sister, "that you may bring back to London from Africa the foreign ladies you enslave, in order to supply the places of those whom your absence may bring to the grave. . . . You have so many matters to engage your time until your departure that I could never forgive myself for stealing another moment of it. I cannot, therefore, console myself with the expectation of seeing you again before you join your ship. . . . Farewell!"

How beautiful the imperious girl looked to

the hardened dandy, now that his last card was played and his dismissal spoken! How golden her hair! How inexpressibly inviting the hundred nameless charms of a creature all wondrous curves and tapering lines! The red lips smiled sweetly on him, over her eyes the lashes drooped tenderly. Incomparable Frances! Lost for ever, and all for a tiny band of gold to encircle one of those lissom little fingers, and a parson's blessing. Poor Jermyn!

The dandy was gone. But the comedy was over, only to give place to tragi-comedy. Jermyn, after all, remained in England, and Frances, unable to endure the mortification of being jilted by an insignificant coxcomb, jumped at an offer of marriage from Sir George Hamilton, a member of the Abercorn family, a gentleman without fortune, but with an illimitable appetite for fighting. Soon, however, the beautiful bride was a widow, and Providence, an ever-vigilant manager of the world's stage, contrived that Talbot should opportunely lose his wife, whom he had taken as a helpmate in his disappointment. The pair of mourners met again in France. The flaxen-haired widow was as fatal to Dick as the flaxen-haired maid; but the widow was kinder far. They were married in Paris, and henceforth he had as his ally a woman as clever as Sarah Churchill, and one as daring and restless in

her ambitions, but one far more richly endowed with the qualities that win love and strew its path with roses.

Circumstances threw the sisters into different camps. Sarah's future was inevitably linked with that of the Princess Anne, and a dark outlook she must have felt it sometimes at this period, with George of Denmark enthusiastic only over his bottle, and Anne ever fretting at the inexorable law which condemns children to await upon their parents for their inheritance. Frances, on the other hand, was naturally a loyalist. Her husband, if not the King's first counsellor, was second to none in his confidence. She was a Countess, thanks to the King. Her husband was lieutenant-general commanding the Irish forces, thanks to the King; and in a little while she would herself rank next to a queen, for she would, she anticipated, be wife of the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. She was loyal, therefore, not only for favours past, but for favours to come; and if at times she bridled at the thought that Henry Jermyn, her faithless lover of the old days, shared with her husband the King's most secret aspirations, to soothe her resentment there was always the reflection that in her encounter with the famous coxcomb she had dimmed beyond repair his prestige as a man of invincible gallantry.

## CHAPTER X

LET some prince of magicians, risen from forgotten tombs of Chaldea, wave his wand above the city in the purple dome of night and weave a wondrous spell, murmuring incantations learned in schools that now lie level with the sands of the desert, but which of old were cradles of Eastern mystery where was taught the lore of signs unfathomable.

Silvery beams, like vagrant rays from far-distant stars, flit across the velvet pall of the sky. In a twinkling they come and are gone north, south, east, and west—signs, indeed, unfathomable to those who possess not the secret talisman. But to those who know they are beams of light with strands inwoven of gossamer grey, faintly luminous filagree, foreign to earth, banned of heaven, born of a necromancer's impious power. They trace the flash of the Chaldean's wand lulling Nature to sleep, and evolving a world that for one fantastic moment obeys the wizard's rebel rule. . . .

A curtain of blackness, dark as blindness, blots

out the city. Perhaps it is blindness, for one knows not the way of the magician. Only for a moment, then the curtain quivers as though a breeze played with its vast inky folds, and shade softens into shade until through the abyss of jet things take shape, though dimly. . . .

Lo! the spell is woven! The city is enchanted! Here is London of the Stuarts!

Time, dazed and blindfold, has gone astray over the passes through the clouds of night, and shrunken, dingy London of the days of Anne lies before us, with the dead back from their sepulchres, sleeping or waking, mourning or roystering, as they did long ago when they still had some choice in their parts, and the town was in reality London of the late seventeenth century.

The curtain of blackness has dissolved, and it is beneath a starlit sky we roam past the shrine of Our Blessed Lady of Rouncyval at Charing Cross down Whitehall.

Hark to the tramp of the sentinel pacing round the ancient home of the kings in the echoing silence of the night!

On through the gates and courtyards, past the guards, who call out no challenge, for citizens come and go freely here. It is the castle of their lord, and, with the familiar custom of feudal times, it is their privilege to make his home in some sense their own.

From an engraving, after a drawing by Akena.

ANNE AS PRINCESS ROYAL.

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The Palace erected by successive monarchs, without any uniformity of design, formed nevertheless a picturesque citadel of Royalty. Barely a vestige of the great rambling pile remains to-day; but if one conjures up a vision of Hampton Court at midnight, with its solemn courts and mysterious alleys, its haunted lanes, its deep arches plunged in gloom, its narrow doors that seem to have been slammed for centuries, its casements glistening darkly, significant of deeds being done behind them that may not see the light—then with this picture in the mind's eye, and being made aware of the general resemblance, travelling backwards through the centuries, one easily recognises by the Thames this Palace of Whitehall, where sleeps King James II.

Forward now to the Cockpit, where abides with her Danish lord the Princess Anne. The Royal apartments and those of the great officers rise above the river. Between them and the Cockpit lie the Palace gardens, the bowling-green, and the tennis-court; while spreading away behind is the Park, a noble expanse of green, draped now in the demure vesture of night.

The oaken door opens without word or touch, for to-night magic reigns in Whitehall, and crossing the threshold of the Cockpit one holds

one's breath in the very centre of the enchanted Castle.

Softly now up the oaken staircase, along the corridors, where shadows chase the shadows and ghosts lurk in the folds of priceless tapestry. Knights that once rode with the chivalry of Europe against the Saracen frown from embrasures of massive gilding, and dames, surprised, look modestly out from the dark panels upon the daring intruder who has groped his way thither from the strange world of a later century. The statuary, the armour, the tapestries, the paintings tell silently and grimly the history of England, and many a page, too, of the romance of immortal Norman and Plantagenet, of bold Lancastrian and crafty Tudor. Memorials, too, are here of a different breed—the Stuarts. Here is a portrait of young Prince Henry, Anne's grand-uncle, snatched away at the dawn of manhood, gallant, fair, and wise, as youth with eager blood and mettlesome spirit may ever be. There are eyes peering from out a life-size canvas, chilling one's blood with their ineffable wistfulness. They enchant in the midst of enchantment, for there is sorcery in the very name of Mary of Scotland!

Ah! Here is the antechamber we seek, a lighted taper throwing into bizarre relief, like a portrait of Rembrandt, the figure of a gentlewoman-in-waiting; and there, beyond, with the

shadows piled behind her, blending with the rich tapestries and furniture of oak and ebony, sits a young matron, her destiny written on her pensive brow. It is the Princess Anne herself, pouring forth at her writing-table the secrets of her soul, the secrets that now are secrets no longer, for blazoned to the world we read them as history, and know the writer for what she really was—know her as the gentlewoman dozing in the adjacent gallery never knew her, though she looked into her eyes from day to day, and waited on her night after night, when these outpourings of a princess's heart were fermenting in the busy brain which kept her from her couch. Little did Anne opine that these letters, so laboriously conned over and penned with such regal contempt for syntax and spelling, should be preserved to establish her place—a sorry place—in the Pantheon of Queens. They reveal the Princess's soul more truly than ever did the confessions of an Augustine, those of a great sinner and saint, or the diary of an à Kempis, the daily thoughts of a monk who learned to be a seer in the solitude of a convent garden. For mortal man or woman is neither all shining perfection nor great sins. The fabric of human nature is woven of infinitesimal faults and infinitesimal virtues, and in Anne Stuart they were woven into a texture wondrous fine, so fine indeed that the pattern

would often lack either colour or form were her letters not there to light up all the threads elusive but precious. Becoming accustomed to the dim light, one might with an effort of imagination discern the arrangement of the Princess's drawing-room, and with eyes touched with the magic glamour of this night give form to the shadows, while Anne, alternately thinking and writing, laboriously plods on with her letter.

Italian cabinets of exquisite design, carved with superlative artistry, are filled with treasures of every land, curios from near and far accumulated by her Royal ancestors. Tapestries from the finest looms of France and the East adorn the walls, and drape the massive frames inset with masterpieces of the famous painters of Italy, Spain, and Holland. There are gorgeous rugs from the Levant, skins from the wilds of Europe and Africa, dainty card-tables of precious wood from the virgin forests of America, ivory statuettes, each worth a noble's ransom, rare volumes and prints, gifts from the ambassadors of princes and the grandees of many lands. It was a drawing-room worthy not only of the second lady in Britain: the eyes of Marie Thérèse herself, trained to every perfection in art and luxury, might here have rested content.

Unconscious of the prying eyes that look out upon her from the gloom, Anne writes on. The

theme is Lady Sunderland, wife of the bold Robert, and those lines are intended for her sister, the Princess of Orange. But there is no honour in witchcraft. Between the wraith of the Royal lady and the enchanted living secret can there be none. Peer over the graceful shoulder where the light falls upon the pages. It is the hour of judgment. Let Anne reveal her soul:

"The Lady Sunderland plays the hypocrite more than ever, for she goes to St. Martin's church morning and afternoon because there are not people enough to see her at Whitehall chapel, and is half an hour before other people, and half an hour after everybody is gone, at her private devotions. She runs from church to church, and keeps up such a clatter with her devotions that it really turns one's stomach. Sure there never was a couple so well matched as she and her good husband, for she is throughout the greatest jade that ever was; so is he. . . ."

Anne throws down the pen. Her vocabulary fails her; or can it be that she has misgivings about her spelling? Bother spelling! She yawns. Still that word eludes her. Something that, despite magic, sounds like a gentlewoman snoring comes from the antechamber. Anne puckers her brows. Had she been an Elizabeth she would have sworn roundly. But Anne was feminine always, so feminine that she could be

very vulgar, with the vulgarity of a too motherly charwoman, but never masculine enough to be boisterously profane. Checked but not defeated, Anne took up her pen again.

"So is he," she repeated aloud to collect the current of her thoughts. Then the pen ploughed forward to the completion of the idea:

". . . The subtlest workingests villain that is on the face of the earth."

"Subtlest workingests villain!" Brave Anne! The devil take the dictionary! Why should it not be "workingests" if you wish it so? Ah, Compton, Bishop of London, at one time of the Life Guards, you it was who taught the Lady Anne to spell! Perhaps you did your best with your Royal pupil. Perhaps they spelled so in your regiment.

The theme relieves Anne's feelings. To her sister she may unburthen herself of things she dare breathe aloud only to Sarah Churchill, and her devoted, stupid, George. With lips compressed to a thin, malignant line of red, and brows drawn peevishly together, let her sketch of Lady Sunderland proceed:

"She is a flattering, dissembling, false woman; but she has so fawning and endearing a way, that she will deceive anybody at first, and it is not possible to find out all her ways in a little time. She cares not at what rate she lives, but never pays anybody. She will cheat, though it

be for a little. Then she has had her gallants, though may be not so many as some ladies here; and with all these good qualities she is a constant church-woman, so that to outward appearance one would take her for a saint; and to hear her talk you would think she were a very good Protestant; but she is as much one as the other, for it is certain that her lord does nothing without her."

It is all in primary colours, very spiteful, a little brutal. But one likes it so, because if the portrait is crude it is for that reason all the more expressive of the painter. The touch has no polish. It is the touch of nature.

One phrase in the letter has a vitriolic air of truth and directness which suggests the influence of the autocrat of the Cockpit.

"The jade fawns and fawns, but she can't deceive me." One can imagine Sarah Churchill withering with such a retort some meandering effort of Anne's at criticism of Lady Sunderland.

"Then she has had her gallants!" Upon what strange targets do random shots light at times! For while Anne writes to her sister in Holland, Lady Sunderland too has her correspondent at the Court of Orange in the person of one who ever brought to the Princess's House confusion. This was Henry Sidney, British Minister at The Hague, whom years before scandal had coupled with the name of Anne's

mother. Now was the circle of Sidney's life cutting across that of the daughter's.

Henry Sidney, a gay, unprincipled rake, was Lord Sunderland's uncle. Sidney and James had in their youth been companions, and when the Prince married his friend was given a post in his Household. His presumption lost him his office and he was dismissed from Court, but his dismissal did not imply guilt on the part of James's wife. Rather was it a tribute to Sidney's insolence. That he was forgiven later is proved by the fact that he cut a distinguished figure at James's coronation. An untoward incident very nearly marred the ceremony. The Crown was toppling from James's brow when Sidney averted the accident. "It is not the first time," he whispered to the King, "that my family have saved the Crown."

Better far that Sidney had remained in disgrace, and that the Crown had rolled round the Abbey sanctuary. But with James it was ever thus. He forgave where justice, not mercy, would have been wisdom. He was implacable, or permitted others to be implacable, where severity was fatal to the Throne.

Sunderland obtained for his uncle the post of Minister at The Hague. Perhaps he had his own reasons for sending him abroad. According to Barillon, the French Ambassador in London,

Lady Sunderland carried on with Sidney a *commerce de galanterie*. From her point of vantage in London she kept her friend apprised of all that passed at Whitehall, while she learned through him how events marched at the Court of Orange, and, better still, had an ally there who in the days to come would be a pilot to safety should the storm burst.

Charm of personality won for Sidney his success in politics. Manners made him, manners preserved him, they condoned his sins, they confounded his enemies, they obtained him promotion, and supported him on the uncertain pedestal of his dignities. They enabled him to maintain a foremost place in an intrigue where his confederates were remarkable, above all, for their astuteness and duplicity. His smile was wisdom, his diplomacy was embodied in a caressing tactfulness which to men made him charming, to women irresistible. "Le beau Sidney" was a synonym for breeding and an epitome of the profligacy of the day, a warning to husbands, a challenge to lovers, a toast for the jovial, a sign for the World, the Flesh, and the Devil.

Such was the man with whom "the lying jade" of Anne's letter was in correspondence, tunnelling a mine for the ruin of the King. And working parallel with their schemes was Anne herself, Anne, the rogue of rogues, in a palace of roguery.

See her still labouring at her pen while Whitehall sleeps. Now the theme is the Earl of Sunderland. She writes:

"I am denied the satisfaction of seeing you, my dearest sister, this spring, though the King gave me leave when I first asked it. I impute this to Lord Sunderland, for the King trusts him with everything, and he, going on so fiercely in the interests of the Papists, is afraid you should be told a true character of him. You may remember I have once before ventured to tell you that I thought Lord Sunderland a very ill man, and I am more confirmed every day in that opinion. Everybody knows how often this man turned backwards and forwards in the late King's time; and now, to complete all his virtues, he is working with all his might to bring in Popery. He is perpetually with the priests, and stirs up the King to do things faster than I believe he would of himself. This worthy Lord does not go publicly to mass, but hears it privately in a priest's chamber."

The cream of Anne's droll wrath has to come. The Earl's future tempted her to don the mantle of the prophetess:

"One thing I forgot to tell you about this noble lord, which is, that it is thought if everything does not go here as he would have it, that he will pick a quarrel with the Court, and so retire, and by that means it is possible he may make his court to you."

And so did it all come to pass. But when the storm burst, and Lord Sunderland rode gaily

through it, nobody perhaps was more astonished than the Royal prophetess.

Before we leave the Cockpit, before the magician withdraws his spell, and the enchantment fades into prosaic noonday, Anne must take up her pen once more and write to her sister, this time of a great lady, accomplished, virtuous, loyal, now nearing her martyrdom—the Queen. A little distance away, beyond the courts and quadrangles, was Mary of Modena herself, wondering mayhap if the young mistress of the Cockpit really loved her, wondering if, in the storm that was gathering and would soon burst around these palace walls, the hand of Anne would take hers, repaying with priceless sympathy the love which the girl-bride from Italy long ago lavished on the motherless maid. Fond delusion of a good woman's heart! How vain that hope let Anne's pen tell:

"The Queen, you must know, is of a very proud and haughty humour, and though she pretends to hate all form and ceremony, one sees that those who make their court that way are very well thought of. She declares always that she loves sincerity and hates flattery; but when the grossest flattery in the world is said to her she seems extremely well pleased with it. It really is enough to turn one's stomach to hear what things are said to her of that kind, and to see how mightily she is satisfied with it."

The weary lady throws down her pen and yawns at her huge watch with something of reproof that Time should be such a beggar in chivalry as to side against a lovely princess without a party. For party had she none. There was, to be sure, good George, very large and very loyal to her. George could listen, could obey, he could agree, but never by any chance could he be the author of a revolution, never electrify them all with a word of command, or dispel her doubts with a whisper of sage counsel. With dog-like fidelity he was ever at her side, or within call. But her heart cried out, not for a devoted mastiff, but a prince to point the way, and lead her from the morass wherein she was floundering to firm ground.

Away in his apartments is George, good, solemn, stupid George, happy with his bottle—his bright, sparkling king. His blonde face glows with the cheer bestowed by this ambrosia of the gods. What knows he of the tortures of the lady vexing her soul about a thousand things, though her bills were paid by her good father? He supposed he was a good father as he still sat on the throne. Confound politics! The liquor was excellent, and Orange be damned! Excellent English sentiment that, made to trip off a foreigner's tongue. God bless the King, though he was a Catholic and the wine was . . . . But

no, of course not; wine was wine, without faith or morals, and stole warm and mellow to the heart of every man born of woman, whether he thanked God for it like a plain Lutheran, or, like a pious Catholic, offered his bouquet of gratitude to the sweet Lady Help of Christians that she might take it to the Throne.

The sadness of the hour creeps on the Princess. She leans forward until her snowy brow rests on her white hands. The lace ruffles fall backwards from her wrists, revealing alabaster arms from which Praxiteles might have carved his masterpieces. The light, burning low, falls on the bowed and shapely head, and under its fitful beams the rich brown tresses glisten like burnished copper quaintly chased.

Does the cross press upon her stooping shoulders? One would fain have it so, and imagine that in moments like these was the malice of lighter hours expiated. Conceiving her in this attitude of sorrow, one relents towards her, and notwithstanding all the selfish malevolence of her letters, one's sympathies go a-hunting to find for her misdeeds some palliation, for her ingratitude some apology.

And now the witching hour hastes to its final instant. The dust that lies upon the buried cities of Chaldea calls to the wandering spectre. The empire of the magician is demolished. The

spell that cast the glamour of another age upon London is dissolved. The Palace of Whitehall, with all its courts and lanes, its alleys and gardens, its solitary lights, its thousand casements, quivers like a castle in the air. Quivering, it melts away, and the stars cease to twinkle on a mirage of necromancy.

## CHAPTER XI

IN January 1687 a few lines appeared in the *London Gazette* that filled with grief and dismay two noblemen, who saw the whole scheme of their lives thrown into confusion by a Royal whim. In clubs and coffee-houses men read with amazement. Here indeed was news: The Hydes had fallen. The Princess Anne's uncles were in disgrace. All over the town nothing else was talked of by the gossips; while, elated that the King should thus alienate his own kindred, the partisans of Orange dispatched the welcome tidings far and near.

Where the Hydes had fallen who could hope to stand? This question, artfully whispered to the anxious, settled their course of action. The open-hearted and simple-minded asked no further proof of the King's intolerance. Plain Englishmen could forgive the King for being a Catholic. Whether he went to Mass or stayed away hardly mattered to them. It was their way to allow their princes luxuries within reason. A King should be in mischief of some kind; but

so long as honest men minded their business and markets were good the country could not go to perdition because a Catholic gentleman, English to the backbone and ready to shed the last drop of his blood for his motherland, was given a command in the militia or a ship in the navy. But for the King to cast aside old men, and they his brothers-in-law, who had served him loyally all their lives, in sunshine and storm, ran counter to their spirit of fair-play. It was mean. They would not treat their servants so.

How Robert, Earl of Sunderland, must have relished these comments of plain men! What fools must they all have appeared—King, courtiers, and citizens—to his lordship! With their blunt intellects, their point-blank outlook they were children in his hands.

The downfall of the two Hydes, Lord Rochester and Lord Clarendon, marked the climax to his intrigues for obtaining absolute supremacy in the King's council, and what, they say, was still dearer to his heart, control of the national purse.

Anne was a witness of this curious drama, in which Sunderland's wits bore down all obstacles. Its ultimate drift was inexplicable to her, for how indeed could she be expected to fathom designs which the Earl himself could hardly plumb? No foresight, however, was needed to

enlighten her as to the duty of an affectionate niece when she saw her uncles tottering from the places they had filled so long. But Anne watched impassively the duel between Sunderland, whom she detested, and Rochester, bound to her by ties of blood and the remembrance of a thousand gentle associations of her childhood. And when the overthrow of Lord Rochester was assured, she sealed her lips upon the fond word which, whispered to the King, might have softened or delayed, if it could not altogether avert, his misfortune. With Rochester driven from power Clarendon could not hope to maintain his place alone against enemies so formidable, and he too was lost to the administration.

Sunderland had early in the reign awakened to the temporal if not to the spiritual advantages of the religion of his master. A Protestant minister, however astute, could never hope under this régime to be as powerful as a Roman Catholic. Sunderland, however, did not act impetuously. He was far too clever a diplomatist for that.

He dropped hints opportunely which fostered the King's hopes of seeing his Secretary become a convert. But this Sunderland was in season a fellow fully conscious of the value of his immortal soul. He therefore would not hurry where his eternal salvation was at stake. So

good a son must not lightly forsake the shrine of his fathers. Evidence had to be examined, dogmas proved, history sifted!

These things all took time, but meanwhile there was an article of faith which needed little demonstration to Robert's mind. It was that gold is equally precious under all political and theological dispensations. To extricate himself from his embarrassments, therefore, he agreed to sell the secrets of the Cabinet to Louis XIV. for a pension of £4,000 a year. His patrimony was inadequate to meet his losses at the gaming-tables, but this French subsidy helped the gambler to gratify his passion while preserving him from those financial anxieties so fatal to the calm examination of theological problems. Such divergent mental activities might seem in ordinary cases somewhat incompatible, but to Robert's elastic conscience and penetrating mind the excitement of cards paid for with the price of treason, and the study of the catechism of the Council of Trent, were grateful alternatives.

It was an unfortunate circumstance for Rochester that the Lord Treasurership was the post in the Government which above all others appealed to Sunderland's ambition. Early in James's reign it must have dawned on Rochester that his office was little likely to be a sinecure. Symptoms of unrest were everywhere. New

From a photo by Emery Walker, after the picture by Sir Godfrey Kneller in the National Portrait Gallery.

LAWRENCE HYDE, EARL OF ROCHESTER, K.G.

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favourites emerged from the most unexpected quarters, while old ones had to adapt themselves to wholly new circumstances or suffer eclipse. Rochester was one of the first to feel the change, and in a desperate effort to retain his ascendency he fell into a disastrous mistake.

We have already seen Catharine Sedley, empress of the unfortunate monarch's heart, alienating from him the sympathy of chivalrous men by holding up to public contempt the contrast between his religious professions and the slavery of a vicious attachment. Rochester endeavoured to please his Sovereign by patronising Catharine. To a man who had learned his manners at the Court of Charles II. there was nothing repellent in such a friendship. But now everything was different. The King was a sinner who would be a saint, and the Queen, deeply religious and tenderly attached to her husband, was wounded to the quick by the baseness which would coolly pilfer from her her lord's affections for the sake of a passing political advantage.

Lady Rochester's part as ally of her husband was, it is averred, one of singular infamy. She, it is said, appeared on the scene to direct the jealousy of the Queen against a young and innocent girl. But happily the true state of affairs was revealed in time, and Mary of Modena knew Rochester for what he really was—a crafty man

with high intelligence of a certain order, but with a nature devoid of one true spark of spirituality. He had many of the common-place virtues and some of the common-place vices. But these were not adequate to sustain him in the crisis with which he was soon to be confronted, a crisis which Rochester imagined would never arise, fervently counting, no doubt, on being preserved from it by his kinship to the King, and, above all, through the influence of his fair relative at the Cockpit.

Anne would one day be Queen. Her religion was that of her uncles. Other families might find a change of creed advantageous; but the Hydes were in a sense a distinct branch of the Royal Family, with Anne at its head. Protestant it would remain.

This sentiment was no doubt suspected by Sunderland. Perhaps, indeed, he had more substantial grounds than suspicion for giving Rochester credit for a certain stubborn devotion to the faith in which he was reared. The Lord Treasurer paid assiduous court to the bottle. He once became so drunk at an aldermanic banquet that he stripped himself almost stark naked and wanted to climb up a sign-post to drink the King's health. In such moments of exhilaration Rochester's prudence would naturally desert him, and his heart would be worn on

his sleeve for examination by the curious. A thoroughly Protestant heart they found it to be.

Sunderland artfully suggested to James that Rochester was in some doubt as to points in dispute between Catholics and Protestants. James heard with the gullibility which made him so easy a dupe to the crudest deceit, that this pious wine-bibber was in spiritual distress. One can hear Charles II.'s hearty laughter ringing through Whitehall at being told such a story. But James had lost any sense of humour he had ever possessed. Few rakes turned saint can carry the aureole with such grace as to preserve their keen sense of the ridiculous unblunted, and James, unfortunately for himself, was not one of the rare exceptions.

Angels must have wept with mirth when the King, taking Rochester into his closet, confided to him that he shared his dark, perplexing secret. Rochester's eyes opened wide. His face, habitually tinted to a generous glow by long devotion to the decanter, looked as if it would burst. Had one of them lost their wits? If so, which? Ah! that treacherous extra bottle of the previous night. Or was it bottles? Faithless wine! Poor Rochester! One can see him pressing his hands to his head to collect his wits, at which the King pities him, crediting him with sublime perturbation of soul.

"Dear Rochester, Rome is the Rock. On it stands the lighthouse which has braved the storms of nigh two thousand years. . . . !"

"A lighthouse!" It was indeed the very thing the Treasurer wanted. With farcical amiability he fell in with James's temper. He confessed his spirit was riven between the charms of Rome and Canterbury. But through unsuspected windows of his soul strange illuminants were shining. The King was enraptured. He ordered a disputation to set his brother-in-law's doubts at rest. Rochester had not the art of travelling as slowly as Sunderland. He was not a diplomatist. Soon all the cards were on the table, and James saw that the Lord Treasurer, greedy of power, greedy of self-indulgence, the most unlikely looking martyr in all England, would probably go to the scaffold before deserting his faith.

James was deeply chagrined. Rochester, as a searcher after truth, was a miserable failure, and the King who could believe in him a laughing-stock. Rochester should go. James shed tears at parting from his old friend. But the Minister had become suddenly possessed with a dogged spirit of independence, while the King on his side was obdurate. And then it was that the *Gazette* announced that the Treasurership had been put into commission. Rochester was de-

posed, and Clarendon was deprived of the Lord-Lieutenancy of Ireland.

Now were the prizes coveted by the Secret Committee within their grasp. The door to the Lord Treasurership was open to Sunderland. The Lord-Lieutenancy was vacant for Tyrconnel, and the handsome head of Frances Jennings was already giddy with visions of the semi-regal pomp of Dublin Castle. An envoy had gone to Rome who would crave a cardinal's hat for Petre, and there remained only Jermyn for whom the King should find an avenue to reward.

The symmetry of the scheme so elaborately mapped out by the Secret Committee was spoiled by the King. Sunderland was ready to act as warder of the coffers of the realm. Who so worthy as Sunderland? Who could make gold go so far or so quickly? This embryo Treasurer had innumerable qualifications for the highest trust in the kingdom. But likewise he had one disqualification that to the economical mind of James was insurmountable. He was a spend-thrift. To have grossly mismanaged his own affairs was no recommendation to the Sovereign in a guardian of the national purse; and so, when the prize was at his very hand, when all his complex schemes had beautifully matured and reached the destined conclusion of a mathematical problem, when he had seemingly achieved

a brilliant victory, Sunderland had in reality lost everything, and he was left to eat his heart out with disappointment—another Tantalus.

Jermyn was provided for with a seat on the new Treasury Commission. The renowned dandy was thus obliged to forgo, with the best grace he could, his ambition of becoming Captain of the Lifeguards for a post in which the wits hoped he would keep the King's money with better success than he had done his own—an allusion to the inheritance he had dissipated in gambling.

The cardinal's hat for which James had sent his Ambassador to Rome was destined never to arrive for Petre. The Pope considered James's policy wanting in good sense, and was not disposed to extend special marks of favour to a priest whose prudence was sadly inadequate to the delicate responsibilities into which he had drifted. The only member of the Secret Committee, indeed, who realised his ambition was Tyrconnel.

When Clarendon fell Tyrconnel's hour had come. Sunderland, thwarted in his own designs, behaved towards his confederate with characteristic disloyalty. He recoiled from the fulfilment of his compact. The Lord-Lieutenancy for Tyrconnel! Preposterous! It was a post for a nobleman with a distinguished record, or at least for the head of some house whose pedigree conferred indisputable priority. Sunderland ex-

amined Talbot's claims by this nice standard, and found that they failed in a lamentable degree to satisfy his new-born scruples. The great Roman Catholic nobles of England had their man for the post in the person of Powis, a lord of ancient lineage and courtly manners. What right had Dick Talbot to contest such respectable and conventional pretensions? But Talbot did. He cared as little for respectability personified by a Powis as he did for convention personified by such a sham as Sunderland. The Earl of Tyrconnel approached the Earl of Sunderland with wide-open purse. It was a meeting of gods—of a kind. One can picture the pair, fire in the eyes of one, the other growing more suave the more closely he was pressed.

"Fifty thousand pounds, my Lord President," said Tyrconnel. "Fifty thousand pounds the day I am gazetted his Majesty's viceroy in Ireland!"

"There are difficulties, my lord," urged Sunderland, almost pleadingly.

"What are they?" retorted Tyrconnel.

Sunderland hesitated, as well he might. He must have seen that the country was drifting fast towards revolution, and Talbot was the least desirable of associates at such a time for one who hoped to be on the winning side, whatever might happen, at whatever cost of pride and name. But the motives inspired by such a thought, though

conclusive to his own mind, against Tyrconnel's claims were the very last he dare mention to this blustering and indomitable fellow, whom he had no desire to meet as an avowed and deadly foe.

Still Talbot would not be denied. He had fought and lost—fought and lost too often to miss the fruits of victory when the battle was his own. He had one quality which Sunderland with all his marvellous brilliancy lacked. He had the strength to push home a success.

Goodness knows what the Queen thought of Talbot, but Her Majesty had some reason to admire Lady Tyrconnel, for in days gone by she had resisted temptation personified in James. The influence of Mary Beatrice was now invoked on behalf of the husband of the virtuous Frances. There is a story of a magnificent chain and pearls, which had been presented by Prince Rupert many years before to Margaret Hughes, having been purchased by Talbot for the Queen. They were valued at ten thousand pounds. Probably not a word of truth was contained in the story. Not but that Mary might have accepted from Talbot a gift which, in splendour at least, was worthy of a queen.

He was her husband's lifelong friend, a fearless supporter of his policy, the man who was to make Ireland a stronghold of loyalty. His wealth, too, was enormous, and his rank con-

From an engraving, after the picture in the collection of Lord Beaulieu.

DICK TALBOT, DUKE OF TYRCONNEL.

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siderable. Moreover, Mary could accept with honour a gift which a poorer princess should reject or receive only by appearing to sacrifice her pride to the gratification of possession. For James was so rich that he could afford to indulge his Queen with all the jewels her heart could desire.

It was not pearls, therefore, that secured to Tyrconnel his viceregal throne. The King believed in him as he believed in no other man amongst his courtiers and friends. He felt that he was irresistible in his own land, and, desirous of strengthening the Crown in Ireland the more it was assailed in England, he resolved to make Tyrconnel his representative in Dublin. And he did. The Royal command settled the wrangle. It allayed Sunderland's scruples. It silenced the pretensions of Powis. Sunderland, Jermyn, and Petre had to submit to disappointment in their respective ambitions. Against one the Treasury was barred. The captaincy for which another craved eluded him. And the red hat that was to make the Churchman happy never left the Papal palace. But Tyrconnel, more fortunate in his aspirations, to the consternation of the Prince of Orange and his partisans, was sent to rule over Ireland, though with a title rather less high-sounding than Lord-Lieutenant. He was Earl of Tyrconnel, the King's Lord Deputy.

## CHAPTER XII

"THE Churchills going over to Rome!"

The day William of Orange heard that rumour the Court at The Hague, never a cheerful place, must have become more than ever a slough of despond. The Prince could always take an additional dram of the fiery liquor of his native land to sustain his fortitude. But the unfortunate Princess had no such consolation. She could only fly to hide herself in her own apartments from the thunder she dreaded to see upon her husband's brow.

So great was the commotion caused at The Hague by this report that the Princess Mary at once wrote to the Cockpit on the subject. Unhappily the letter is lost. But one may infer the contents from Anne's spirited defence of her favourite. She wrote to Mary in March 1688:

"Sorry people have taken such pains to give so ill a character of [Lady] Churchill. I believe there is nobody in the world has better notions of religion than she has. It is true that she is not so strict as some are, nor does she keep such

a bustle with religion, which I confess I think is never the worse, for one sees so many saints mere devils, that if one be a good Christian, the less show one makes the better, in my opinion. Then, as for moral principles, 'tis impossible to have better, and without, all that lifting up of the hands and eyes, and often going to church, will prove but a very lame devotion. One thing more I must say for her, which is, that she has a true sense of the doctrine of our Church, and abhors all the principles of the Church of Rome; so, as to this particular, I assure you she will never change. The same thing I will venture, now I am on the subject, for her lord; for though he is a very faithful servant to King James, and the King is very kind to him, and I believe he will always obey the King in all things that are consistent with religion, yet rather than change that, I dare say he will lose all places, and everything that he has."

The basis for the story that Sarah contemplated changing her religion is not very apparent; but it is easy to imagine that during the spring of 1688 questions of dogma filled an extraordinary place in Court life. Of old it was a masque or a dance, a flirtation or a morsel of scandal which agitated Whitehall. Now points of doctrine were canvassed with more eagerness than at a mediæval university, the great majority of the casuists bringing to the disputes a most comprehensive ignorance of history. Where contentions raged Sarah Churchill was little likely to suppress her

feelings, if they could be given free rein with any reasonable degree of safety. But with the fate of Rochester and Clarendon before her eyes, discretion would at this season recommend itself strongly to her. James, it is true, can hardly have realised how absolutely she dominated his daughter's household. Her official position in the Court was so entirely a secondary one that it protected her from the attentions bestowed upon the faith of persons of more consequence in the table of precedence. But even had the King realised the power exercised at the Cockpit by Sarah he would hardly have taken steps to eliminate from the tangle of his affairs a factor which he would naturally assume to be favourable. James counted with complete confidence on Anne's loyalty. Trusting his daughter fully, he trusted her household, and on none of his servants would he be disposed to rely more implicitly than on the Churchills.

Sarah's sister was in Dublin representing the Queen ; her sister-in-law, Arabella Churchill, was the mother of children very dear to the King. His Majesty was kind to Lord Churchill. Anne herself had said so in her reply just quoted to the Princess of Orange. Putting their clever heads together, this couple may well have asked themselves at this juncture what they had to gain by turning renegade to a Sovereign who watched

over their advancement as though they were his own children.

As they saw the time draw near for the inevitable parting of the ways, it was with profound anxiety they debated their policy. As in the case of almost all those around them, self-interest was their main guide. That the rule of James ensured them brilliant prospects was plain to intelligences so acute. But their course of action had to be modified by the growing unpopularity of the King. It was necessary to please His Majesty, for he was the lord in possession, while the Prince over the water might never, after all, succeed in ousting him. In the effort to steer both ways at once the Churchills seem to have exposed themselves in some way to the suspicion that they were prepared to follow the example of the courtiers who had deserted the Established Church. And this suspicion was wafted over the water to Holland, arousing the ire of William and the uneasiness of his wife.

Nor was Anne's course more clearly defined for her than the Churchills for them when once she closed her ears to the clarion notes of immutable justice. Like the Churchills, she had to think of what would please the King, and what would conciliate her brother-in-law. The King might weather the storm. True, the breakers were thundering on the shore with deafening

wrath. Wherever he turned the sky met him heavy with anger, dark as pitch, disaster in the furry blackness of the lowering abyss. But the Princess in her short life had seen enough to know that nothing is harder to lose than a kingdom, and nothing more easily held than the loyalty of Englishmen. This loyalty had given James his throne, in spite of an agitation that knew no scruples. And the same loyalty would in all probability support him through every trial and difficulty, even against himself, just as it had given of its best blood in rivers and stopped only at miracles in a last desperate struggle to save his father. This was what might be expected from the simple-hearted loyalty of simple English people as opposed to the courtly trimming and secret treason of the Sunderlands and Sydneys. And if the King should win! If he should carry through successfully the policy in which opposition only made him more stubborn! Anne had to contemplate such a contingency from day to day, and play the double part of a loyal daughter and a zealous conspirator.

Here was a mental strain from which over a long period the Princess had no relief, and which was exhausting enough to wear a woman of finer nerves into her grave. Anne's letters only give us half her history for this period—the half in which she courted Orange. Her other part, that

of the dutiful child of the King, called for no letters. Her pen had to dissimulate but an hour now and an hour again, and then she was alone to collect her thoughts and throw all her mind into effecting her purpose. But the larger part of her life was lived in the light of the Court. She was continually the King's companion ; and apart from all other eyes, remote from every ear, these two spoke together, long and earnestly.

At such moments what subjects would rise to the lips of the King but those nearest his heart? To his idolised Anne he would breathe his suspicions of Orange. To her he would whisper words that to no other would ever pass his lips—his hopes for the future, his anxieties about the succession. With voice broken with emotion he would paint the joy to him if he could but know that some day when his work was done . . . over Catholic England would reign the good Queen Anne . . . Anne . . . the Catholic. . . . And the noonday sun would remind the Queen at Whitehall, the magistrates in the courts, the citizens in their shops, the labourers in the fields, of the Angelus, and as in mediæval days the whole nation would pause a moment in the round of commonplace toil, and, turning in spirit to the Holy City, recite the sacred drama of the Annunciation.

To hear the King in his moments of exaltation reveal his most cherished dreams was an ordeal

very different from that involved in composing letters to her sister which would flatter her husband's ambitions. Perhaps she too, like the Churchills, in trying to steer both ways at once gave some colour to the suspicion that she could at least tolerate a Catholic favourite in the person of her devoted Sarah.

Whether it was that the rumour had no foundation, or that the swift challenge which Mary of Orange hurled across the North Sea the moment it reached The Hague, allayed Sarah's misgivings on the subject of religion; certain it is that no more is heard of the matter.

Some day, when the treasures of the Vatican archives relating to this period have been thoroughly explored, a connection may be found between these mysterious rumours concerning the Churchills and one of the most inexplicable episodes in the history of Anne. It is an episode which belongs to the period immediately following her accession; but if the mystery is ever unravelled its explanation may perhaps be traced to the secret history of those months which preceded the Revolution when everything was possible, and Anne, from motives of ambition or prudence, may have taken half a step towards Catholicism, which was at the time carefully concealed, and all trace of which was afterwards diligently obliterated.

The kernel of the mystery is preserved in the State Paper Office in the form of an affectionate letter to the Queen from the Pope. In it his Holiness addresses Anne as one of his flock. If she was at any time received into the Catholic Church there is doubtless some record of her conversion in the Roman archives which has never yet seen the light. Strange as it seems that so important a reference, if it exists, should have escaped research, it would be stranger still if the Pontiff credited the Queen in paternal terms with holding a faith to which she had never given her adherence. The solution has been suggested that because Anne celebrated the office of touching for the evil according to the Latin formula, the Pope for this reason claimed her as a Roman Catholic. The office, it is pointed out, contains invocations to the Virgin Mary not in harmony with the Anglican system. The solution is altogether unsatisfying, because the doctrine of the invocation of saints is only a minor point of difference between the two communions. One may be pardoned therefore for imagining some other explanation more closely allied to human emotions, more akin to the clash of contending interests, which have given to the intriguing Cockpit its romantic glamour.

Anne's defence of Sarah from the attack made upon her by Mary of Orange was full of unex-

pected spirit, so unexpected that it almost looked as if she scarcely feared a quarrel with her sister. Such a mood would be in harmony with a certain impatience of the Orange alliance, or a doubt that in the coming crisis her brother-in-law could prevail against the King, and that she might safely set a limit to the sacrifices of dignity and loyalty to be made on his behalf. It was at this time that the King's temper hardened to the true spirit of the Stuart autocrat. He became now to his finger-tips his father's son, determined, like a gambler, to take every hazard rather than stand to win any but the supreme stake. And Anne, meeting such a prince every day, spending hours in his company, had to keep a watch upon her every word and look. A smile, a glance, a lifting of the eyebrow might have betrayed the dark background of her thoughts. A braver spirit than hers, inspired by a cause more honest, might be excused for growing weary of such a long-sustained effort to maintain a poise so delicate. And, sick to death of the life she was leading, she may have welcomed some sign that the King's policy was triumphing, not for love of him, but just as a man condemned to die hails as a relief the bitter end which reprieves him from the infinite tortures of a distracted mind.

Looking back now on that spring of 1688 one sees clearly enough whither James was drifting.

But one is apt to forget that his contemporaries were denied an equally distinct vision of the direction of the tide, and to lose sight of the multitudinous anxieties of those whose lives and fortunes trembled in the balance.

Far from the course of history presenting an unobstructed view, far from the final settlement being the inevitable deduction from a cut-and-dried set of factors, the reverse was the case, and the most profound seer amongst them all had no certainty as to the ultimate issue of a strife which in the end seemed to be decided by a whim of the gods.

The extreme partisans were ready to take any risks, but prudent men of shrewd judgment and long experience were not only doubtful as to the issue before the crisis came, but were equally a prey to uncertainty when the hour arrived for decisive action. Godolphin, most cautious of statesmen, bred up at Court, familiar with all the opposing characters in the conflict, demonstrated his discretion by his profound reserve. Godolphin was the man of illimitable common sense. Anne would watch his every move, striving to learn something of the devious ways to fortune when every face was a mask, and every path was mined and cross-mined with tunnels leading to Heaven alone knew where. But from Godolphin she could learn nothing.

They said he worshipped the Queen, to whom he was chamberlain. The beautiful Blague, the lily amongst the flaunting passion-flowers of the masque of long ago, was dead, and the bereaved courtier found, no doubt, some romantic pleasure in serving a lady as stainless as the departed Margaret. But this old-world sentiment, so congenial to one of an ancient Celtic race, did not exclude a wary regard for the future in the shape of a vague understanding with Orange, and which, were she to know of it, would do no more than confirm Anne's perplexity.

Turning from the immediate circle at Whitehall to the wider and more representative arena of politics, Anne could not fail to be impressed by the reticence of the most brilliant leader in Parliament. Halifax was the most accomplished politician of the day. He had in the past achieved great things, and now that great things were expected, men looked to him to light the torch and lead the way. But Halifax was the Prince of Trimmers, and when one of intellect so commanding temporised, who would be surprised at doubt and hesitation on the part of a woman who should always find her strength in others? It was not that he was on occasion wanting in courage. It was Halifax who, by his eloquence and enthusiasm, had defeated in days gone by the attempt to exclude James from the Throne on

account of his religion. But for Halifax, James perhaps would never have grasped the sceptre, and but for the King's want of sagacity in dismissing Halifax there might never have been a Revolution.

Halifax was, within certain limits, an opportunist. But this opportunism, so convenient and indispensable in secondary affairs, had to yield to immovable obstinacy in matters which he was pleased to regard as of prime importance. At the death of Charles II. he was Lord Privy Seal. He surrendered the Privy Seal to become Lord President of the Council. Halifax, however, soon discovered that his new dignities were void of substantial power, and that his voice in the government was as futile as the soundless cries of a nightmare. At first the proud noble could hardly realise that he who had deserved so well was in reality, if not in theory, set aside in favour of men who could boast few of his qualifications for the service of the Crown.

Halifax, the champion of legitimacy, the man who had defeated the Exclusion Bill, and aroused, almost single-handed, the latent loyalty of Parliament and the country in James's defence, saw a gambler in all things like the reckless and versatile Sunderland preferred before him in the councils of the Sovereign. This King-maker, proud as his prototype, could not brook this

humiliation, and with the same deadly efficacy formerly employed for James he now combated the measures on which the monarch had set his heart. Halifax was a man of great weight in the government from the point of view of a King bent upon adventures which would arouse widespread hostility and suspicion. His pre-eminent ability was unquestioned. He represented the cast of mind which was accepted as the standard sense of proportion by the thinking elements of the nation. His mind was free from what a people always a little impatient of the Church would call the ecclesiastical taint; if by breeding he was a cavalier, he was also an apostle of free speech; if his life was not exemplary, it was at all events orderly and dignified. He was too wise to be a rake and a coxcomb, and too much a man of the world to be accounted inferior to either in any society, however frivolous.

Brilliant as his brother-in-law, Sunderland, his suave, easy nature mantled sterner stuff than any which entered into the grain of Robert's unprincipled nature. On the question of the Test Act Halifax threw down the gage of battle to the King, and was dismissed from his office for his hardihood. Yet this man, who might be pardoned for evincing hostility which the King had courted, manifested during these eventful months of the

spring of 1688 no desire to overthrow James. On the contrary, having made some allowance for his natural desire to enjoy the goodwill of the Prince of Orange, his conduct does not augur very complete confidence in the hopes of William's more zealous supporters. He had too much to lose to take sides lightly.

Like him, Anne had much to lose, had more to lose, indeed, than the whole array of conspirators and trimmers marshalled together. And in proportion to the huge stake she had to hazard, was her distress. When at length she had to make her choice and enroll herself finally under the banner of her father's enemy, her hand did not pen the vow of treachery. Churchill it was who, in a fine frenzy of devotion to all holy things, as so consecrated by the High Priestess, Sarah, and himself, pledged to the Prince of Orange Anne's resolve to lose her life before being guilty of apostasy. The pledge was, under any circumstances, a safe one for Anne. Little likely was she to lose anything while her father was King of England. Rather more heroic was Churchill's vow for himself that he would lose all his places before changing his faith. But alas for Jack's sense of humour! The great soldier was no artist, and with one stroke of the pen he marred the touching picture of a broken soldier going forth, having lost all for his faith, to court fortune

at the sword's point over the seas. Why should he be prepared to lose only his places? Why not a more sublime flight of fancy? And the pen stumbling along its uncertain course proclaimed that the gallant Churchill would, if the need arose, shed the last drop of his blood for the tenets he revered.

## CHAPTER XIII

"LA, the King!"

"Heavens, madam, the King!"

Anne started to her feet to salute the Sovereign.

The King it was, and the ladies who had cried out in their surprise and confusion had just time to rush pell-mell into a closet, where they huddled together, holding their breaths, leaving all alone in her chamber their mistress, the Princess Anne.

The imperious dames who, forgetting their accustomed dignity, raced like schoolgirls to cover, were Lady Churchill and Lady Fitzharding. The King's guards could not detain their ladyships this morning to pay their respects to their liege. Rumpled silks and torn laces and touzled locks—even powder and patches brushed off in the scrimmage—were small misfortunes in comparison with a meeting, face to face, with the King under the circumstances which they were aware brought him to the Cockpit.

Curtseying low before him, the King may well have noted that the Princess's lips were bloodless, that her hands trembled, that she drew herself up

slowly, as though her limbs had suddenly grown leaden. She scarcely raised her eyes to her father's face, but demurely hung her head. If she was not really ashamed she was, perhaps, a little afraid.

Tenderly did the King take the young matron's hands in his and kiss her lovingly. She was inexpressibly dear to him, this winsome lady with the rich glossy hair of chestnut-brown. She was the last link left him with the romance of his youth, now that a husband who was almost his open foe had robbed him of his Mary. There were tears in Anne's eyes. Like the spoiled child she was, she could almost blame the King or any one for the distress born of her folly.

The Princess was in debt. At another time this might have been the most venial sin by which a Stuart could offend. But James was at once rigid and liberal in the regulation of money matters. His code of finance was simple and straightforward enough to satisfy the most honest tradesman in the City. "Live within your means, and pay as you go," was his rule. This golden maxim, borrowed from the ideal *bourgeois* home, governed the Palace, and if she would please him his daughter should not depart from it at the Cockpit.

But Anne had no reverence for golden precepts, and for this one least of all. Gold was made to spend; and not only did they spend it at the

Cockpit, it seemed as if they used to melt it there. Hence James's saunter across Whitehall Gardens this morning, saluting gallant and dame, serving-man and serving-maid as he went, for all were welcome to come and go here, and hob-nob with the monarch in his pleasure grounds. Not all the salutes were, however, courteously acknowledged to-day as the beaux swaggered past, courting the Sovereign's notice with sweeping bows. Wasted were the blushes of the damsels hastening to keep their tryst at Rosamond's Pond in St. James's Park, the sanctuary where love-vows were exchanged, for the King was blind for the nonce to coquetry, though usually there was cheer in his eye for the comedy of life's springtime as played in the glades close by his threshold.

His Majesty's air was preoccupied, his step was spiritless. On his brow there was a cloud. He had just received a plaintive appeal from Anne, and in person he was going to answer it. She wanted money, a great deal of money, to satisfy her creditors.

Anne's income from her father was £32,000 a year, a sum of enormous value in those days, when luxuries, if costly, were few, while all the ordinary needs of life were inexpensive. Yet with this more than Royal revenue Anne was heavily embarrassed, her expenditure being £7,000 in excess of her income.

The eavesdroppers who had been in such haste to leave Anne alone to bear the King's displeasure scarcely breathed. Curiosity had got the better of their fears. They wanted to feast on every word of this Royal encounter. No syllable would they willingly lose. They pressed their hands upon their bosoms to still the noisy panting of their hearts, quickened to tumult by their dash to hiding. But so gently did he chide this foolish young matron that there reached their straining ears only broken phrases like these:

"A noble allowance. . . . Twice cheerfully have I paid your debts . . . no word of remonstrance. . . ."

There was silence in the chamber. The prisoners in the closet thought their hearts would burst in their frantic efforts to make no sound which might betray their presence. Eavesdropping on the King would be no venial offence to be punished with a word of reproof. If the door should fly open and reveal these crouching listeners, their careers at Court were at an end, and the Princess would be in need of two gentlewomen for her household. If some malevolent sprite had but made either lady cough, or scream at the invasion of some imaginary mouse, loyal service would have been done to the King and his daughter. For these ladies spying on the Royal pair were likely to be of more worth to the Crown

at a distance from Court than as pampered inmates of the Palace.

Sarah is a familiar figure. Lady Fitzharding is rather less so. But she is a stranger only because of her married title. Lady Fitzharding was one of the daughters of Lady Frances Villiers, Anne's old governess. She had played with the Princess and Mary of Orange in the days of their childhood at Richmond. There were six of the Villiers sisters. A large family, with their fortunes in such wits as Heaven had endowed them with, each in her own way managed to transmute opportunity into gold. The eldest of the band led the way to the conquest of power. Her deeds are writ large all over the period. She was the real Princess of Orange, a princess to make the sensitive shudder. How Elizabeth Villiers broke the spirit of Mary, and broke her heart, if a heart she had to break, is a story which began on a honeymoon the dreariest that ever was, and ended only at Kensington Palace when Mary's spirit had fluttered away to rest. In the history of the time one meets the other members of the Villiers sisterhood under the titles of Lady Inchiquin, Mrs. Berkeley, Madame Puissars, Madame Bentinck, and Lady Fitzharding.

The whole family were more or less William's agents, and Sarah's companion at the Cockpit was the Orange spy of Anne's household. There

was no secrecy in the relations of William with Elizabeth Villiers. Anne was aware of the thorny road along which lay her sister's pilgrimage, and resented it with a degree of vehemence which helped to make her brother-in-law loathe her. Her indignation, frankly expressed at the indignities heaped upon her sister by the eldest of the Villiers tribe, seems scarcely consistent with her patronage of Lady Fitzharding. Family ties were, however, by no means indissoluble bonds of friendship. Anne herself was not a pattern of fidelity to claims of kinship, and why should others be bound by ties to which the Stuarts were indifferent?

Moreover, Anne was vain enough to suppose that where she condescended to show favour, her *protégée* should be infallibly content. That she should trust Lady Fitzharding was to her mind a sufficient reason why her ladyship should love her and treasure her secrets as she would her life. Just as Elizabeth Villiers had obtained a fatal ascendency over the affections of Mary when both were children, and just as Sarah had established her dominion over Anne, so Lady Fitzharding had inspired some attachment in the heart of the younger princess which obtained for her a place amongst the retinue at the Cockpit. Sarah, with her deep insight into human nature, must have had little relish for the association.

It meant that there was in the Palace a faithful chronicler of her conduct for the benefit of the Prince of Orange. But against this there was an advantage which in some measure counterbalanced it. She had under her eyes an agent of The Hague conspirators, an agent who, while prying into the affairs of others, could not veil all her own from wits, the keenest at the Court. Let her tell all she could discover, with Sarah as inquisitor she would reveal more than she could ever learn.

Hush! the King is speaking again.

One of the two prisoners of the closet, as she listened, gasped in anger or astonishment. It was Sarah.

"... I am convinced," the King went on, "that you have about you some one for whose sake you have plunged yourself into these inconveniences. ..."

Sarah could have cried out. Her eyes blazed. Her handsome face grew purple with rage. She clenched her hands until the nails dug deep into the palms! Lady Fitzharding, trembling for her own safety, would whisper a petition that she might not betray them both. Poor fool! As if the peril of a Villiers could move Sarah Churchill to compassion. The beautiful virago, confident of her own strength to restrain her wrath within prudent limits, and with no mind

to deny herself the luxury of so indulging it, glared like a tigress upon her companion who, cowering into herself, repented her impertinence!

Again the King's voice reached them, still soft and kind, but very serious.

"... For the future," he said, "you must regulate your establishment with more diligent economy. ..."

The King could see that the Princess was deeply wounded by his rebuke. Feelings, at least in part due to the circumstance that there were witnesses to this chiding, were attributed by the King to causes far more worthy of a daughter. With a few words of farewell, the more gentle because designed to alleviate her distress, His Majesty retired.

Now there was no further need for restraint. Like a tigress Sarah bounded from her lair. Her tongue was loosed, and nimbly did it keep pace with her fury.

"Oh, madam!" she cried, "this is all due to that old rascal, your uncle!"

The old rascal was, of course, Lord Rochester, who at the date of this incident had not yet been relieved of the Treasurership through the success of Sunderland's chicanery. Rochester, it would seem, blamed the Churchills for the depleted purse, which was a periodical occasion of agitation to Anne. At such times James

was her never-failing refuge. The wild profusion of her expenditure was less exasperating to the King than the mystery in which its cause was developed.

The Princess could supply no satisfactory explanation of her bankrupt condition. Nor were her accounts more illuminating. Anne was an inveterate gambler. Cards and the chase supplied her only distractions. Her passion for play would easily account for her embarrassments, for ruinous stakes were nightly lost and won in the clubs and salons, and the King's daughter at the Cockpit would naturally play for sums just as large or as small as pleased her. If Anne as a rule lost her money, and Sarah as regularly won it, the fortunate lady who obliged her mistress, with so much profit to herself, would regard her winnings as a legitimate source of gain, the fair wage of one who beguiled the hours that hung so heavily on the hands of her Royal patron.

Basset was possibly not the only form of extravagance which made such disastrous inroads on the Princess's revenue, nor the guineas swept from the card-table the only consolations of Sarah's service. Gifts in keeping with the Royal donor's rank and the merits of the recipient may have helped Lady Churchill to support the trials of existence at Court.

An incident of life at the Cockpit at this time illustrates at once Sarah's liberal notions of her own deserts, and with what nicety of detail the Prince of Orange was posted in the details of its household arrangements. For the Cockpit, two pages of the backstairs were required. The Princess Anne granted permission to Lady Churchill to sell these two places. There was nothing extraordinary in the privilege. The sale of posts of all sorts was a practice consecrated by custom. The only antidote to the abuses which flourished under such a tradition was the publicity with which the transactions were conducted. But though there was nothing unusual in the concession extended to her favourite by Anne, the sale of the places was attended with strange consequences indeed.

Lady Churchill's choice fell upon two Catholics. It was a remarkable selection, which examination makes none the less inscrutable. The new pages paid twelve hundred pounds for her ladyship's patronage; but there must have been many sound Protestants who would have paid as much for the honour of waiting on the second lady in the kingdom. When the appointments were announced there was instant commotion. The interests of Orange were imperilled! The Establishment was at stake! One Catholic page of the backstairs was a menace

From a photo by Emery Walker, after the picture by Sir Godfrey Kneller in the National Portrait Gallery.

SARAH JENNINGS, LADY CHURCHILL, LATER DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH.

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to the liberties of England to make brave men shudder, but a backstairs held by two Papists! By the blood of the martyrs, never! The storm frightened Anne. She puckered her brows and concentrated her mind on a great effort to appreciate all sides of this momentous controversy. A light dawned upon her. If one of these fellows should invoke saints on her backstairs! If in the silent watches of the night one of these flunkeys should cross himself! They might introduce holy water surreptitiously into the Cockpit, and Prince George, sensitive though he was to error, might mistake the bottle. . . . The thought was too dreadful. The pages were dismissed, and the partisans of Orange once more breathed freely.

Sarah's troubles only began when grace illuminated thus happily the recesses of Anne's mind. She held twelve hundred pounds belonging to these villains who had so insidiously threatened the serenity of the Kingdom. What was she to do with all this money? The rejected pages would gladly receive it back. But their disgrace had to be taken into consideration. Could so much money be entrusted to such rascals with justice to their distracted country? Sarah, by a mathematical process known only to herself, worked out an answer to the problem, and her unlucky *protégés* were returned eight

hundred pounds, the balance of four hundred pounds being the measure of their chastisement and of their patroness's compensation.

The extraordinary timbre of Sarah's conscience with regard to money matters may be deduced to some extent from the misfortune of these two gentlemen. But to Sarah the transaction wore a complexion grotesquely virtuous. She actually boasted of her part in it as an example of her magnanimity.

A nobler conception of her duty towards one at least of the victims of Orange intolerance inspired Anne. This man had long been in her service in other capacities, and would no doubt have continued at the Cockpit had not his desire to purchase advancement obtained for him unfortunate recognition at The Hague. When obliged to send him away in deference to the wishes of her sister Mary, who traced some deep political intrigue in the whole affair, though doubtless not of her own unaided vision, the dismissed servitor was liberally provided for by Anne. This sympathy for an old retainer was characteristic of the Princess. Her generosity indeed constituted one of her greatest charms. She delighted to give. Yet by some strange contradiction, this lady of contradictions, this Princess Perverse, who was always eager to shower rewards upon her friends and retainers,

would not make for her father the smallest sacrifice.

Her prodigality, her reckless contempt for money, impart to Anne something of the indefinable but irresistible Stuart glamour. No one of the doomed and fascinating race was like any other. And yet the portrait of a Stuart, whether vices or virtues predominate, is unmistakable. They stand alone in their sins, alone in their sorrows, alone in their ambitions. No one thinks of James I. or Charles II. in relation to Anne. Yet the same unbounded extravagance adorns the life of each with a certain gay and reckless splendour. Anne disdained to think about money. Instead, she thought, as it were, in gold. But in the end there was little to show for all this child-like trust that, as the fields produced their fruits with unfailing regularity, so would the Treasury ever yield an abundant harvest. Her imagination was too limited, her knowledge of the world too restricted, her education too shallow to admit of her extravagance ever leading her into the commission of anything brilliant. It made her an easy victim for those who were given the chance to fleece her, and scrupled not to use it. That was all.

The delightful confusion which reigned in the administration of the finances of the Cockpit is illustrated by the achievement of the accountant,

a Mr. Maule. The audacious Etherege, did he but know of this gentleman's name and station, might have been pardoned for seeing a pun in the former; and the jest would have been warranted by the manner in which the Princess's affairs suffered under his able supervision. Maule's training as an accountant was in keeping with the spirit of the Cockpit. His service began as bedchamber man to Prince George. In this office the most exacting strain upon his intellect would perhaps consist in counting the wine. His duties, however, such as they were, left Mr. Maule some leisure, and this happy circumstance saved his talents as a bookkeeper from being buried in oblivion.

The Churchills were the instruments of Mr. Maule's rise to fortune. It was they who obtained for him admission to the Royal service; and to Sarah belongs the credit of having discovered in him the master whose sleight-of-hand would make her mistress's ledgers balance to the penny. But alas for the vanity of human hopes! Under Mr. Maule's expert manipulation the Princess's position became worse than ever, and the visit of the King to expostulate with her on the subject of her failure to live within her income marked the crown of his labours. At the time Sarah blamed, as we have seen, that "old rascal," Anne's uncle, for the King's annoy-

ance. But later, when Mr. Maule had grown to be a person of some consequence, he had the temerity to quarrel with the lady who had watched over his first hesitating steps as a novice to the Court, and then Sarah cast on the affair light that made it more intelligible. Complaining of his ingratitude, she wrote:

"I had not only brought him to be bedchamber man to the Prince, when he was quite a stranger to the Court, but, to mend his salary, had invented an employment for him, that of overlooking the Prince's accounts."

Mr. Maule's ingratitude must be forgiven by posterity, since Sarah's confession that she "invented" this employment for him was elicited by his offence against her. Without this confession how tame a personage would this Maule be! But as the man who fired Sarah's genius to invention, we can at once see in him an agreeable and aspiring fellow, very amiable and very clever, with a gift for making himself useful when required, and of vanishing when superfluous. And Maule is also interesting, not only because of what he was, but because of what he symbolised. The relations of Sarah and George's bedchambermen were to be repeated a little later, but on a more impressive scale, with Maule's place filled by Abigail Hill, that other "stranger to the Court," who by-and-by was to eclipse the im-

perious Sarah herself, and fill the place in Anne's affections where Lady Churchill had reigned so long an unrivalled autocrat.

With King James's warning ringing in her ears, "For the future you must regulate your establishment with more diligent economy," Anne had to appease the wrath of the infuriated Sarah. Unhappy Princess! What could she do with Maule as her accountant and Sarah as her monitress and his! It was hopeless . . . hopeless! And so, in the piling up of the temptations which eventually decided the Princess on the path of treachery, lucre doubtless played its part, though, with all her faults, she loved it little. But if she loved it little, at her right hand were the Churchills, with itching palms, having much, but ever grasping and grasping for more.

## CHAPTER XIV

"I MEAN to be in St. James's Palace to-night, if I lie on the boards," exclaimed Mary of Modena. And the Queen was as good as her word. Late that night she was carried to the Palace, which had been her first English home, and there was born to her on the following day a son of sorrow, the very own child of a Queen of Tears.

The night was that of the 9th of June, 1688, and Mary, feeling that she was fast approaching the gates in the mist beyond which all was uncertainty, was impatient to escape from Whitehall to her old home, lying very brown and dingy across the Park, like a castle whose lords of restless blood often wandered to far distant lands, leaving its echoing courts to desolation and decay.

Whitehall was the gay heart of a spirited nation. St. James's was as unlike it as though the paths over the intervening strip of green were hundreds of miles long, leading to some lonely outpost where grizzled warriors and sad-faced women garrisoned some forgotten keep. It was

the very place to enchain the imagination of a Queen nurtured on the legends of Italian chivalry. The angel-spirit of her little Isabelle hovered round its turrets and blessed its galleries, and she willed that her child should be born in that hallowed place.

For nearly twenty years England had had no Prince of Wales. It was as though the luck of the Royal House had departed, and that Nature herself had executed on the Stuarts the fate to which the Cromwellians had condemned them. It was late in 1687 that the rumour got abroad of the Queen's expectations. The King's joy was boundless. A boy was the prize for which his soul craved. The King loved his daughters dearly, especially tender was his affection for Anne; but to rule a great kingdom is a man's work, and the man for Merrie England was a son of their kings. How he prayed to be blessed with a son did Heaven alone know! But pray he did with passionate fervour, and to his prayers were united those of his queen, who, with touching solicitude for her husband's happiness, loved him all the more intensely because of her wrongs. Like another Griselda, she won her lord by gentleness, passing to conquest over the rugged road of tribulation. The gift with which she would reward the King for his love was a son, and none other could be commensurate with her passion to

delight him, nor could a lesser boon make him quite content.

For this not only did King and Queen pray, but Heaven was stormed with petitions on their behalf. Pilgrimages were performed, relics of the blessed invoked, and sacred places visited. King James sought the holy well of St. Winifred, and at the ancient Welsh shrine implored the gift to his House of a prince of this gallant Celtic land—a Prince of Wales. The Duchess of Modena begged the intercession of the Madonna at the far-famed shrine of Our Lady of Loretto. There she prayed with all the fervour of a mother that the Blessed Lady might plead before the Throne of her Son for the Divine breath—the wondrous tongue of flame, which, knitting the mysteries of Nature and Supernature, makes man.

With so many minds inflamed with the ardour of desire it is not surprising that when the joyful news of the Queen's expectations was proclaimed the emotional translated a blessing into a miracle. Forgetting in their elation that Mary of Modena was a young woman, comparisons were instituted between her hopes and those which inspired the aged dame in Abraham's tent with the rapture of a bride. It was the ravishing promise of the coming of Isaac.

But the sky was not all cloudless. The good tidings had scarcely been announced when a

rumour, softly whispered at first in dark places by evil tongues, grew and grew until it became the gossip of the market-place. In the clubs, in the coffee-houses, in the City it was heard, and the loungers in Whitehall gaped at the Royal apartments as though confirmation of this fable might be espied through wicket or lattice. It was fable that in one form or another has been heard in every land where broad domains have depended upon the coming of a baby boy.

It was said that if a girl were born to the Queen a spurious infant would be put in her place who would be palmed off on the nation as Prince of Wales. Surmise is baffled as to who started this story, which imputed the grossest fraud and injustice to the King and Queen. A significant look from some Royal personage or political magnate, a nod of doubt or acquiescence, a cynical smile, the lifting of an eyebrow, may have given completion to the idea but half formed in some underling's brain, and only half uttered. But the kernel of the calumny, however formed, grew as only a lie can grow. Taken up by the thoughtless, their imagination endowed it with whatever symmetry they deemed essential to so momentous a secret of the Palace. And what the thoughtless added and superadded in their zeal for art, the malignant improved upon in their zeal for mischief.

The Princess Anne was captivated by this notion of a Pretender being introduced into the Palace as a Prince of Wales. It was just what might have been expected from Anne. To analyse anything which ran with her fancy was distasteful to her. Analysis might discover weak spots and the stamp of dishonesty. This would be very gratifying to a searcher after truth, but very disappointing to a lady who, if the truth failed to fit her theory, was only angry that truth should be so clumsy. One of Anne's theories was that Mary of Modena was not destined to be the mother of a future King of England. The only proof which the Princess could adduce in its support was that if the Queen had a son who lived, she herself would never wear the Crown! To this amazing logician the argument was conclusive. She could not believe that Nature would be guilty of inflicting on her so cruel a disappointment. The blow would be too wanton. There was, of course, her sister Mary to come before her. A poor sort of Queen she would make, to be sure! But it would never do to allow Nature the privilege of making distinctions and drawing comparisons. One could never tell to what error of judgment such a concession might lead. Amongst her friends she would speak her mind frankly about Mary; but to Nature never. So there was Mary, and there was herself.

England was made for them, and they for England ; and Nature, confounded by the subtlety of the reasoning, humbly said :

" This Queen must keep her vigil with arms empty. Anyhow, she is an Italian, and very likely a Papist. Let her be scourged. Here are two most estimable young ladies of the English Blood Royal—whoever mourns they must not be grieved. One of them, she who is the younger and more beautiful, is a creature of scintillating wit. That logic of hers leaves me abashed. How fortunate nobody ever thought of reasoning like her before, or poor old Nature might go to sleep ! "

And thus it was that Nature laughed at Anne. When it became apparent to the Princess that an heir might be born her chagrin drove her nearly frantic. Her letters survive to convict her of such envy and malice and treachery as would be credible on no other evidence.

Anne, writing to Mary of Orange, prophesied that her father would very shortly have a son. The prophecy was intended to convince Mary of the King's resolve to foist a spurious child upon the realm. The Queen's part in the fraud she touched upon thus delicately in her wrath :

" When any one talks of her situation, she looks as if she was afraid we should touch her ; and whenever I have happened to be in the room,

and she has been undressing, she has always been gone in the bedroom. . . .

"These things give me so much suspicion, that when she is brought to bed no one will be convinced 'tis her child, unless it prove a daughter."

"Unless it prove a daughter!" Thus does Anne with her inimitable impudence dictate terms to Nature herself. And again "If the expected offspring should not prove a daughter" it would not be the Queen's child.

Never was there such drawing-room comedy with the spirit of tragedy hovering near. But Anne was conscious neither of the humour nor the pathos. She was too grimly in earnest in her efforts to prove that Mary of Modena's children should be all girls, and that her boys should be other people's.

Anne found Mary of Orange an inquiring rather than an effusive correspondent. The letters from The Hague to the Cockpit during this period were apparently destroyed, or if in existence their whereabouts have yet to be discovered. But Mary had passed through too stern a discipline to revel in childish make-believes. With something of the unfeeling austerity of her husband's nature she learned of the mad tales of the scandalmongers, valued them at their true worth, and if within her heart one chord of

sympathy stirred because of the persecution with which her hapless stepmother was being pursued, she made no sign of pity. Numbed with her own sufferings, atrophied with neglect, pity, perhaps, was dead within her soul ; or if it were not dead, then none was left for others when Mary of Orange, loveless, friendless, childless, scorned, had had her due.

Once more we tread the mazes of Whitehall. This time we turn our backs upon the Cockpit, and invade the Royal apartments. Golden candelabra glisten on the walls. Ceilings and panels are gorgeous with the masterpieces of Europe's greatest painters. The marble staircases are guarded by Royal servants in resplendent livery. Hush ! there is the hum of voices which, low and musical, with a certain vibrant note of command pervading it, announces the sanctuary of the purple. Unseen hands fold backwards the tapestries . . . Behold the Queen's drawing-room ! For an instant the picture dazzles one. The golden candelabra, the ladies' jewels, the men's rapiers, the flashing eyes, the shining silks, the clouds of filmy lace, the panels of bold and lifelike colouring, confuse with their multitudinous impressions. But only for a moment ; then colour blends with colour, and the whole stands forth, with the Queen and a few ladies playing cards in the centre at a dainty inlaid

table, a tableau of flawless design, of impeccable taste.

Close by the Queen was Godolphin, paler than usual, his immobile features set like a figure sculptured in marble. Ever and anon his eye wandered from the Queen to the door, and back again to the Queen. Very different from the child-bride we saw in the theatre at Whitehall the night of the masque, is this pensive lady who now, with Royal bravery, though distracted with fear and oppressed with illness and apprehension, holds her Court.

A gentleman approaches Godolphin. The Chamberlain's features relax a little as though relieved by the whispered tidings. Then the Minister approaches the Queen, and, bowing low to her, awaits a pause in the card-playing that he may deliver his message.

The poor young Queen acknowledges his obeisance with a glance, and continues the game. Etiquette compels. She is on the rack where the grandees of the earth are broken with smiles and courtesies. The Queen dropped her cards. Here was the Minister's chance.

"Madam," he murmured, "St. James's Palace is ready for your reception."

The Queen smiled. Her great dark eyes, made almost weirdly brilliant by the purple shadows beneath them, were instantly shaded by

the heavily fringed lids. Perhaps there were tears in them, which, not for the Crown of England, would she have her companions observe. Then the game was resumed. Bravo, Mary! It was the spirit of Este.

It was close upon midnight when the Court broke up. Then the Queen, entering her sedan chair, and escorted by the King and Godolphin, was carried across the Park to St. James's Palace. She had said she would be there that night, though she had to lie on the boards. And, as good as her word, she was there.

St. James's was no longer the lonely castle deserted by its lord, made more lonely by menials idling away the days without a master. Now the old palace was alive to the very battlements. King and Queen had come with their households, and if there had been some danger that Her Majesty should have had to lie upon the floor, all was not trim and comfortable, we may be sure, for the ladies and gentlemen of varying degrees who made up the *entourage* of the Court.

The June sun was polishing to the brightness of marble the Palace balustrades next morning, and making its grimy walls scintillate like battered bronze above the dewy green of the sward spreading away to deserted Whitehall, when the hopes of the King were fulfilled, and England once more had a Prince of Wales.

The courtiers galloped forth with the great news, and at the Tower the artillerymen, standing ready by the guns, heard the wild clatter of the advancing hoofs, and, ramming home the charge, their salute burst forth over the City almost before the lieutenant's signal. Again and again and again the thunder of the guns rolled over the moat, and the bells of the City churches burst into merry peals.

But there was something of mockery in all these signs of rejoicing. The baby at the palace a Prince indeed! Not he! He was the son of God-knows-who, picked up to delude and enslave the people. For months prophets and apostles had been busy preaching the gospel of a great fraud to be perpetrated on the nation. Behold, it was consummated! Here was the scion of roguery in the Palace cradle!

A beggarly miller's son was to be the future King of England.

That was the story circulated amongst the people. The miller's son, they said, was introduced into the Queen's bedchamber in a warming-pan. To Father Petre was attributed this master-stroke of policy. Simple folk in city and country believed this tale. It appealed to the crude imagination of an illiterate populace, who could know nothing of the circumstances which made it the clumsiest of lies.

The Queen's bedchamber and the adjacent apartments and corridors were alive with people all through that eventful Sabbath morning. Nor were these people all Catholics. On the contrary a great number of them were opposed to the King in religion and politics. The moment the Queen's hour had come messengers were dispatched to summon the Queen Dowager and her ladies, the members of the Privy Council, Ministers, Ambassadors, and the great ladies of the household.

One lady could not be summoned. The Mistress of the Cockpit was not at home for this emergency. She was at Bath, taking the waters. The Jacobites said, afterwards, that she left London of set purpose sooner than be a witness of an event which might blast all her dearest hopes. The Whigs, on the other hand, explained her absence by the fact that the Queen was out in her reckoning by some weeks, and that if the child had not been born until July, as was anticipated, she would have been back at Whitehall in time to bear testimony that this really was her brother.

Miss Strickland, a chivalrous defender of the persecuted Queen, believes that Anne purposely went into the country to avoid being present at the Queen's bedside under circumstances which would have given the lie to all her doubts and

suspicions, and have at the same time deprived her of all warrant for disputing her brother's birthright. Macaulay, as emphatic on the other side, excuses Anne's holiday at such a critical period, when her whole future was at stake, and, according to her own letters, a heinous conspiracy was afoot, on the plea that she did not think it necessary to be at her post a month beforehand. But before leaving for Bath, Anne, in conversation with the Queen, dropped a remark which makes the judgment of historians unnecessary. She said:

"Madam, I think you will be ill before I return."

It was with the conviction, therefore, that all would be over when she should return that the Princess turned her back upon London. That is to say, she went away so as to facilitate the infliction upon herself of an enormous injustice. It was as though one were asked to believe that she handed over the keys of her treasure to robbers, and having heard their pleasure and convenience, moved into the country so as not to incommode their operations.

Anne's uncle, Lord Clarendon, and Lord Rochester, could have been summoned to the Palace. James, however, did not think this was necessary, nor did he invite the Dutch Ambassador to be present. There were consequently no representatives of the interests of his daughters;

and though no blame can be imputed to James for failing to defend himself in this way against a crime which he never dreamt of committing, yet the occasion called for extreme foresight and prudence. The test of both was success or failure . . . and James failed.

But the warming-pan and the miller's son! The Queen was trembling with cold—the cold of fear. With teeth chattering, a lamentable figure in her misery, her ladies, hurrying in, found her seated in a corner of her apartment. She asked that the bed might be warmed before she should return to it. The Queen's request was a command. It passed from lip to lip through the galleries and anterooms, the corridors and halls, until it reached the menials in the Palace basement. Every one of them had heard or read of the plot to introduce a spurious child into the Queen's room. All night, and all through the morning, they had been watching and listening.

They had seen the guards changed, courtiers ride into the courtyard and ride away, gentlemen gallop forth for a breath in Hyde Park. Ladies with solemn faces and ponderous prayer-books hastened to morning prayers at the Palace chapel. But there was no baby, no mysterious carriage, no heavily-draped nurse, no significant bundle and inevitable tell-tale cry. . . .

This command of a warming-pan for the Queen's room on a glorious June morning was the first hint to the servants of the maturing of a dark conspiracy. The pan was got out and dusted and well filled with hot coals, red-hot at that, so that if trickery were afoot the rogues should at least burn their fingers, and perhaps by rare good fortune roast the brat they would make a Prince of Wales. Heads were put together. There were patriotic maledictions from the Whigs of the kitchen, a final coal, the reddest and hottest in the grate, was crammed into the pan, and away it went to warm the Queen's bed, while the whole town soon had it that when it reached Her Majesty's apartment its contents were a baby boy—the boy for whom the cannons thundered and the bells pealed.

Though two hundred years have passed, there rises before the mind's eye sharply, vivid as though it all happened but yesterday, a vision of the sick woman's chamber, wherein every emotion of the human heart, however noble, however tender, however base, found expression.

The Queen in her travail . . . God help her! And the story records not the name of a great lady there whose eyes were wet with tears of sorrow and of reverence for this martyrdom designed by God for woman in the days of the Garden one knows not why!

If Anne was not there by the Queen, an old friend of hers was not far away—the Earl of Mulgrave. Amidst the war of creeds and factions, amidst the maze of intrigues, the gay lover of the Princess in the days of her Windsor romance had contrived somehow to hold his place in the Royal Household. Whatever tender feeling Anne had once inspired had long since been effaced in the white-hot furnace of his susceptible heart. To him the place was a theatre, the sick woman the heroine, doing her part to the life. This was better than the masques of the last reign, an entertainment that not Versailles itself could excel. . . .

There was Sunderland, too, a shade less suave than was his wont, for none knew better than he how quickly now the tide was rising which, surging over the land, might bring even to the most prudent traitor of them all destruction. And when the flood should reach him. . . .

Every moment the group of gentlemen at the remote end of the chamber grew more numerous. Jermyn joined Sunderland, and then in stalked the soldierly Peterborough. Godolphin, his face impassive as a mask, soon appeared. They said he loved the Queen like a young sister. Knowing the gossip, one might think that he was a trifle paler than usual, and that his lips were more rigidly set, as though he were sorry for the

woman, sorry for the child, and sorry for the double-dealing that here he could not bear to think of. . . .

Then Lady Sunderland appeared. When the Royal messenger found her she was taking part in the communion service at the Palace chapel. Her ladyship, whose piety Anne so diligently laboured to perpetuate, was loath to leave the altar at such a moment. She tarried therefore awhile, determined to finish her devotions before obeying the King's summons. But again a messenger approached her, and this time she tore herself away. Perhaps she would have been as well pleased had they let her stay to say all her litanies. For there was the warming-pan with its burden of hot coals before her eyes, and she, for one, dare not swear it had ever cradled a baby. She busied herself close by the sick woman, she, Sidney's friend, so that, though the Dutch Ambassador was not there, The Hague had its spy. . . .

How the Ambassadors, who knew so much of the secret history being made by these men and women, must have marvelled that faces so fair-seeming could disguise hearts so dead to every finer feeling—marvelled perhaps and admired the stoicism which united perfect breeding with the morals and courage of banditti !

One man was there whom the Queen doubtless

wished far away when she caught a glimpse of him for a moment through the draperies of her couch. It was Jeffreys, the judge of the red-hand, the monster of the Western circuit. The Queen shuddered, as well she might, for though as Lord Chancellor of the realm he had a right to be there, yet gladly would she have missed from her bedside so sinister a countenance. And Jeffreys! If he caught the suffering woman's horrified glance it excited not his sympathy nor moved him to shame, for this hero of the judgment-seat had no sympathies and no shame. He had toyed with human life, and proved the hardness of his heart where granite might have melted away in pity.

The Queen Dowager entered with her ladies, and Mary's attendants made way that the elder lady might whisper a gentle word in the younger one's ear. Queen Catharine looked round at the great lords and their dames, she met their glances coldly, and knew them for what they were. For years they had been daily witnesses of her humiliation, and had borne themselves with the same grace while they despised her that now they paraded before this Queen whom they were preparing to betray.

There was a slight commotion. The King! The rake of the old days, the hero of a hundred light o' loves, was now a battered rake indeed,

an old and careworn man, a madman from brooding on one circle of ideas. They talked of miracles, of signs, and of wonders. What miracle like this—that this gaunt man, with little behind him save sins, and little before him save hard fortune, should be loved by the immaculate young Princess of Este, the hem of whose garment he was unworthy to kiss!

The King, standing amongst his councillors, stared incessantly at Lady Sunderland. It was as though he were hypnotised. They wondered why he stared, stern and silent, like a sentinel.

A feeble little cry of farewell to the God of Life, a cry of salutation to the gay world of Death. . . .

It was the new-born babe, and a brighter light shone in every eye, even in the eye of the Judas and of the Nero.

Still the King made no sign. His eye was fixed on Lady Sunderland.

Every instant was a year to him. His heart stood still. He ceased to breathe.

Lady Sunderland turned at last, one finger pressed to her brow.

It was a signal, and the signal read—"A Prince!"

The tears rushed to the King's eyes, and, master of himself no longer, he cried out in his excitement, "What is it?"

"A prince," they answered.

Like one dazed he heard. They were congratulating him, but he did not know what they said or who they were. He was deaf and blind, for all his life was centred in his heart, now bursting with the joy of desire fulfilled.

The ladies jostled one another to see, to touch, the precious child, and then, with an escort of rustling dames—Lady Bellasyse, Lady Isabella Wentworth, Mrs. de Labadie—the Prince was carried in state to his apartments, with the Earl of Feversham as pursuivant heralding his progress.

With transports of joy beyond all power of expression, the King fell on his knees beside the Queen and kissed her. No other language could give form to his feelings.

And then he turned away to leave the Queen to her devoted physician Walgrave. But his Majesty had an inspiration. A sword quickly! Mulgrave, or one of his gentlemen, drew a blade and presented to the King the hilt.

"Kneel, Walgrave!" The sword drops lightly on his shoulder, and the reward of the loyal physician was the accolade of knighthood.

Laughing softly at the good Walgrave's surprise and pleasure, James strode away, the happiest man in Christendom.

The long-hoped-for, the long-prayed-for one had come. The Prince of Wales filled the empty

cradle, a link with the glorious past, a pledge for the future, come to gladden the hearts of Englishmen. But, Lord, what fools these mortals be! The child was his father's ruin. It was his tiny baby fists that shattered the empire of the Stuarts. The infant's feeble cry raised in the nursery of St. James's was a call to war. The winds caught up the challenge, and carried it over the sea to The Hague. William harkened with alarm and wrath. Where were now his castles in the air! Yesterday, through his wife, he was heir to the fair realm of England. Now he was a Dutch Prince, lord of dykes, and canals, and sturdy burghers, and that was all. Oh yes! One thing more! There was his sword, tested and tempered on many a famous battlefield of the Empire.

## CHAPTER XV

FAST as flying post-horses and the lightest of chaises could carry her one could fancy Anne Stuart hastening from Bath to London. Straight to St. James's Palace would the cavalcade gallop, the people crowding into the streets to cheer, a loyal eagerness that warmed their hearts; and the postillions, proud to ride before so great a lady, would whip up their steeds for a final spurt, and with a joyous "hilloa!" charge bravely into the Palace court-yard. The delighted courtiers would come trooping out to meet her, and radiant with joy and laughing in the midst of them, the King. Her voice ringing with gladness, she would congratulate her father. Swift, then, to the Queen! Impatient for a sweeter meeting, there would be a word or two and an excited embrace for her Majesty. Away! Away to her brother the Prince of Wales! Sweet babe! Gallant name! Where? Where had they hidden her baby brother? Ah! There was the cradle; at last the precious boy into whose tiny fists she would put as a plaything her very heart. . . .

Sadly delusive picture! Anne brought to the cradle a heart of stone. The boy had in truth no sister.

James was indeed easily deceived if during these proud days, tinged with apprehension, some intuition did not come to him that Anne was false. Instantly the thought would be banished, for was she not his darling, in whom his fond eyes would see no flaw? But, crush it as he would, again and again it would return—the uprising of reason against the folly of a father who would cheat himself with sad delusions. Jealousy and disappointment such as maddened Anne at the birth of her brother could not be concealed. She was a great actress. But emotions like these turn the blood to gall, and a smile there never was which came from such a heart but looked a mockery of delight.

If Anne's eyes met her father's he must have seen something in them which puzzled and frightened him. He looked around for excuses for her. She was ill. The troubled state of the country made her solicitous for him. She was distressed lest the Prince of Wales should be snatched from them. While all London was ringing with insults directed against the King, the Queen, and the Prince, James would have been relieved to find at the Cockpit one with whom he could freely discuss the troubles of the

Royal Family. But Anne was preoccupied. She listened, but he wanted her to speak ; and when she spoke her sympathy lacked some note, he knew not what, which would make it just what he would wish from a daughter. Yet he dare not admit to himself that her kindness rang hollow, that at the Cockpit too he was betrayed.

Still trifling with innocence, though she was in love with sin, Anne wrote to the Princess of Orange as though she were an inquirer after the truth, lamenting the torch that was not to be found. Thus:

"I shall never now be satisfied whether the child be true or false, maybe 'tis our brother . . . where one believes it a crowd do not. For my part, unless they do give very plain demonstration (which 'tis almost impossible now) I shall ever be of the number of the unbelievers."

A little later the unwelcome baby was ill. His gentle sister wrote to The Hague:

"If he has been so bad as people say, I believe it will not be long before he is an angel in Heaven."

While the child's life hung by a thread, and Anne watched for the messenger from St. James's who would bring the good news that he was no more, the King was bowed in prayer in his oratory. While his heart bled, he offered up to his Creator the child who to him was the

light of the world. Heaven had given him, and, if Heaven pleased, let him be given back.

"Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven, sobbed the broken King, shrinking from the sword which, like the blade of old in the hands of the patriarch, he saw flashing above the altar.

But the call did not come for the child, and so his sisters continued to debate his origin. Mary's character had a directness which one surmises was at times irritating to Anne. About her brother, Mary wanted evidence. At The Hague they did not trifle. The logic of the spoiled child of the Cockpit annoyed her sister. Anne was a stranger to the realities of life. Her unhappy sister had not a girlish illusion left. Anne's mind was as colourless as that of a village damsel, but in the school of suffering Mary's mind had reached the maturity of a woman advanced in middle age. With a certain measure of awe, therefore, Anne received her commands. It was repugnant to the younger sister to obey anybody, but by some strange irony of circumstance obedience was always her destiny. At Mary's behest she collected a detailed account of the Prince's birth from Mrs. Dawson, who, as an old and faithful servant of their mother's, and a sound Protestant, would naturally be a witness friendly to their interests. Mrs. Dawson's evidence would be conclusive to

an impartial mind. But to Anne the truth only meant multiplied confusion. She wrote to Mary that she had questioned Mrs. Dawson, but so warily that she might not betray herself to the good lady as the devil's advocate.

She had, however, to guard against a greater embarrassment than the fear lest Mrs. Dawson should read her thoughts. It lurked in the possibility that the conversation should be repeated to the Queen as an example of the Princess's sisterly curiosity in all that related to her brother. The Queen was not easily deceived. She would jump to conclusions which would do no honour to Anne either as sister or daughter, and, sadder still, would at the same time do her no injustice. When she had spoken to Mrs. Dawson, she wrote to Mary:

"All she [Mrs. Dawson] says seems wonderfully clear, but one does not know what to think; for methinks it is wonderful if it is no cheat, that they never took pains to convince me of it."

Some hint Mrs. Dawson probably did convey to the Queen of the cross-examination to which Anne had subjected her. Did the King hear of this, it would occasion him more distress than all the lampoons of the scribblers of the town. From Orange he expected double-dealing, despite the congratulations carried to the English Court by William's accomplished and profligate kinsman,

the Count Zulestein. Ever pleasing in manner, but crafty as the serpent, Zulestein was the ideal minister for a mission which required him to be a courtier at Whitehall and a conspirator at the Cockpit and at the houses of the great nobles, who were now beginning to enliven their treason with a spirit of reckless bravado.

Events fostered this open display of contempt for the Crown. While men's minds were in a ferment in connection with the malicious rumours about the Prince's birth, James found himself immersed in his famous quarrel with the bishops. Towards the close of the spring of 1688 James had launched his second Declaration of Indulgence. Its terms, put briefly, were that the King, of his own authority, abrogated the Penal Laws. Away with persecution! Let no rough hand of the minister of an unjust law be stretched forth between the Englishman and his God. Let there be an end to the centuries of religious strife. Let these be the boons purchased by the blood of the martyrs of all the Churches, the blessings vouchsafed the prayers of all good men —Peace and Liberty and Love!

It was a glorious ideal, realised in another age, under another dynasty. But James was not the man, his methods not the methods for the gospel of a sublime revolution. He declared in Council "that four of his predecessors having attempted

in vain to establish a general conformity of worship, the Penal Laws against Dissenters having only led to rebellion and bloodshed, he was convinced that nothing could conduce more to the peace and quiet of the Kingdom and the increase of trade than an entire liberty of conscience; it having," he said, "always been his opinion, as most suitable to the principles of Christianity, that no man should be persecuted for conscience' sake, which was not to be forced, and that it never could be to the interest of a King of England to do it."

Many a long year afterwards George II. voiced the same sentiment when they brought him news that a whirlwind of Irish bravery had scattered the ranks of England at Fontenoy. In his wrath cried George, "Accursed be the laws that have deprived me of these gallant soldiers!"

Thus are kings often in the van of thought, chiefs in the cohorts of freedom, while a topsy-turvy fate condemns them to captain the machine of tyranny. James's declaration of liberty of conscience marked another stage on the road to destruction.

The declaration was just, but it was illegal. It was humane, but illegal; Christian, but illegal. Always illegal! That argument was used to demolish the principalities and powers which battled for the Light in the days of Herod and

Nero. And in James's day the law, too, prevailed. The King was the champion of the modern ideal. Against him was arrayed the cold and blood-stained instrument fashioned by the malice of great men and the ignorance of small ones. "Toleration" was the watchword of the King. For answer they invoked the law.

James thought little of the law, because he knew the lawmakers. Parliament had during the Restoration epoch sunk to the lowest depths of corruption. It was an arena where victory rested with the deep purse, leadership with the adept in the tactics of bribery. Legislators were the creatures of France, of Holland, or of the Court. There were patriots amongst them, for no land can in any age, however degenerate, escape altogether the solicitude of Providence. There were honest men and religious ones according to their lights to be found in politics. But politics were not of their making. The mould was not in their hands. The law was to the highest bidder in the mart. The theory that the King can do no wrong is still a legal fiction. But in the days of the Stuarts that the King could do no wrong was more than a legal fiction. It was a creed in which the Stuarts at least were fervent believers. For this faith Charles I. died; for it James lost his Crown, for, like his father, though in pursuit of a different goal, he too would set

himself above Parliament and its statutes, and would be himself the lawgiver. Hence the Declaration of Indulgence and the revolt of the bishops.

The famous seven refused to have it read in the churches. Thus was the Declaration of Indulgence answered with a Declaration of Rebellion. Now were the threads spun, the Fates ready to weave a drama worthy of the stately march of the Shakespearian classics. The rebels were the Primate Sancroft, Lloyd of St. Asaph, Turner of Ely, Lake of Chichester, Ken of Bath and Wells, White of Peterborough, and Trelawney of Bristol. The bishops set off to Whitehall to petition the King to dispense them from obedience to his mandate. At Whitehall they found Sunderland, who immediately introduced them to the King, who read their petition with wrath he could with difficulty govern.

"This," said the King, "is a standard of rebellion."

The bishops earnestly protested their loyalty.

"This," the King repeated like a man dazed, "is a standard of rebellion."

Dazed he was, for he had stumbled on the van of the army that was to destroy him. Here it was in the Council Chamber.

Trelawney broke the painful silence.

"For God's sake, sire," he cried, "do not say

so harsh a thing to us. No Trelawney can be a rebel."

The noble prelate spoke with deep emotion, and on his knees awaited the King's reply. The King was moved, as well he might, at seeing the bearer of a name so illustrious in this attitude of profound supplication. But the gentle impulse passed. Perhaps the King saw farther than Trelawney guessed. For, alas for Cornish chivalry! despite his gallant words, he was "deeply confederate" with William. One of the songs of the Revolution, which is still well remembered, made his name a call to battle: such was the music inspired by a chivalrous race, and such the magic of that ancient house in the bold Duchy.

After Trelawney's passionate outburst the pleas of his companions were only the cold platitudes of brave but commonplace men.

The King spoke the last word.

"I will be obeyed," thundered the Stuart, his dark brow menacing as the cliffs of his native Scotland when the purple clouds bring the sky down to the rim of the island, and cast angry shadows far out over the oily black of the waters.

The King spoke truly. The petition was indeed a standard of rebellion. It was disseminated broadcast with other seditious literature,

some of which is attributed to the brilliant, malignant, but prudent Halifax, who, when rebellion was brewing, might coin an epigram or point an argument for more reckless spirits to exploit, while he himself was content to enjoy the serene beauties of his country seat, far removed from any temptation to those adventures which might mean in the final settlement of affairs the loss of his estates, if not of his head.

What followed is one of the most familiar episodes in English history. The ordeal of the bishops terminated just as the populace were roused to frenzy by the campaign of libel against the young Prince of Wales, not yet a month old. The legal proceedings had been dilatory. On the very eve of the Prince's birth the bishops had been admitted to bail. This in itself was, to the popular mind, a victory over the tyrant.

Affrighted by the gathering storm, some of James's councillors advised compromise. The birth of his son was, they said, a time for conciliation, for clemency. They hinted at the golden way of prudence. They would make concessions. They would move slowly. In trying to secure liberty for Dissenters the King, they argued, should try to avoid infringing the liberties of others, even where these latter seemed

to savour rather of privilege than of equality. But for the King there was no going back. Those around him began to evince signs of panic. But James's will was hardened to adamant by resistance.

Now was he his father's son in real earnest. The blood of the race that would not be defied was up. He was in the mood in which men lead a forlorn hope. Not for worlds would he alter the plan of battle and have the odds reversed which called for the courage of despair. He would conquer or die. And death it was—a lingering death, from a heart broken by the torture of obscurity, of disappointment, of flickering hopes extinguished one by one. His was the slow agony of wrinkles creeping over the face of a famous beauty, not the swift martyrdom which assured Charles of a niche in the Cathedral of the Pitied, where are enshrined the memories of those consecrated to the Heroic by the God of dramatic Chance.

"Compromise," said James, "lost my father his kingdom and his head. I shall not fall into the same weakness."

The acquittal of the bishops was assured, for it would have been impossible, without packing a jury, to find twelve men in the land who would return a hostile verdict. It was a drama in which the fiercest passions were aroused, a drama

relieved by only one faint gleam of humour. Amongst the jurors was Michael Arnold, brewer to the Palace. Arnold would cheerfully have escaped to his vats from his duty at Westminster Hall.

"Whatever I do," he said, "I am sure to be half ruined. If I say 'Not guilty' I shall brew no more for the King; and if I say 'Guilty' I shall brew no more for anybody else."

Had James the nerves of a gladiator he must have trembled now, for the hour had come for judgment. In his own courts he was on trial. The bishops stood at the bar, but the true bar was in St. James's Palace, and behind it stood the King. Curious he should find himself at that palace now, for around its walls in the old days had often surged the clamour of a people roused by his enemies to anger. Again there was the clamour, and this time the direst enemy of the King was James Stuart himself. Hark! What is that? . . . Note the deep flush that so suddenly mantled the King's brow. There it is again—the cry of a child!

That feeble wail reminded him of a scene at Westminster half a century earlier, when a King and his judges stood face to face, and in the end the King's children were orphans, left to expiate their father's folly in the bread of exile. Now what of his own son? . . . Would he ever have

to climb the stranger's staircase, and grow weary in his anterooms, pining for a glance from the page-of-honour which would herald his admission to the august Presence?

As in a glass darkly the King's prophetic soul must have seen the whole panorama of the infant Prince's cross: the home in a foreign land, the hearth where the fire burned cold because the blaze was fanned by charity, the sword rusting in its scabbard, a Blue Riband of the Garter hanging threadbare from its tarnished hilt; on the walls a portrait of James II. filling the place of honour, and opposite, smiling sadly from the canvas on her husband, Mary of Modena, and then, shivering by the chilling hearth, a careworn, aged man, with the impress of sorrow lying heavy on every lineament of his noble and gentle countenance. And this careworn man, alone with the mildewed portraits, alone with his father's sword, and his father's Garter, was the babe whose first cry had echoed through the halls of St. James's!

Evening fell, the evening of this eventful 29th of June. Still no tidings from Westminster Hall. . . . Ministers came and went. The King was moody and silent, and with relief he found himself at last alone. He thought he had long since learned stoicism in palace and camp, out in the heyday sowing his wild oats, and in the

gloaming with his saintly Queen. But in this crisis his self-complacency had deserted him. He was growing old now. He reckoned his years. He had passed fifty. He had left the summit behind and was facing the valley; but as, growing older, he marched onwards, a feeling of uncertainty seemed to seize him. On the right, on the left—were these chasms, or were they shadows! In the mist—were these spectres or men! In the defile—were these death-dealing giants or trees inviting him to their restful solitude! . . .

Through the long night the suspense continued. He whispered by the bedside of Mary of Modena while her lady-in-waiting nodded over a book. He tried to smile above the cradle of his sleeping child. He prayed in his oratory long after the last sound of life had ceased within the Palace and the town was silent as the grave. . . .

Welcome morning dawned at last, and, calling for his horse, the King rode out while yet his subjects slept. Across Hyde Park he spurred, finding relief from his aching brow in the cool air, still soft with the dew. On past the villages of Kensington, and Hammersmith, to the banks of the Thames, and so to his camp at Hounslow.

The King's spirits rose as he rode. His heart bounded at the brave prospect. The river, glisten-

ing in the June sun, streamed like a broad ribbon of silver through fields of green and gold. Through rich foliage he caught sight of villas nestling on velvet lawns. In the deep woods gracious children were at play. The weather-beaten labourers turned from their teams to watch the King and his gentlemen ride past. In the distance rose Sion House, the seat of the Percys, rising from a vast demesne. Here well he knew every meadow, for as a boy he had played in the lush grasses with his brothers and sisters, and every venerable tree was a friend that had lent him its shade when tired, or its girth to hide him when in their games he sought cover. In those troublous days the Percy was custodian of the Royal children, and to the old grange their unfortunate father often rode from his prison at Hampton Court to forget his anxieties in the pleasure of their society. To these hallowed memories, and many another episode in the history of his beloved England, was this shimmering green of park and woodland and the sparkling silver of the river a noble setting.

While the King was at Hounslow, his Queen at St. James's heard a strange sound as of voices in angry commotion, which grew louder and drew nearer, swelling at last into a mighty tumult. The Queen had no need to ask what it meant. Her heart told her the bishops had been acquitted,

and this was the tide of a people's jubilation swelling round the palace of a defeated King. The Queen fled to her child. Peacefully he nestled amongst his pillows, unconscious of the rising storm. . . .

WILLIAM III.

p. 236.

## CHAPTER XVI

"AUT nunc aut nunquam!" The words were William's. Fire there seldom was in the speech of the great soldier. But a sudden conflict of emotions warmed him to an expression of brief but unrivalled eloquence. The chance of his life had come. That "now or never," in its majestic Latin, was for such an emergency the inspired watchword.

The Orange party in England durst not lose the advantage given them by the events of the last days of June 1688. The day of the acquittal of the bishops was the gift of destiny, their appointed Time. To miss it was to lose the tide which never again would reach the flood. While the anger and enthusiasm of the people were still therefore at white-heat, an invitation was sent to William to invade the kingdom. It was signed by Danby, Devonshire, Shrewsbury, Compton, Lumley, Russell, and Sydney. No name amongst them stood for spotless patriotism, none for lofty statesmanship, none for matchless leadership in the Senate or for proved wisdom in Council.

They told the Prince that nineteen-twentieths of the nation desired his coming. William, doubtless, knew better than to believe them. But likewise none knew better than he that it is the man and the occasion that make a revolution. It is for the people to accept it.

Devonshire and Shrewsbury were the heads of families with an historic right to be king-makers. Danby was an obscure lawyer, who had won by his wits and his courage a patent of nobility. Neither, however, had sufficed to protect him from making acquaintance with the Tower of London. Now, though no longer young—and time had allotted him more than his share of vicissitudes—he was seized with the gambling spirit, which makes politics the most uncertain of all sports, the most crushing in its defeats, the most dazzling in its victories. He would risk all, to lose all or double his winnings. In intellect he was the equal of Orange. In daring, the pale and worn lawyer could give points to the most audacious of his military friends. But Danby had no following in Parliament or in the country. His value was the value of the man of brains to him who has employment for them.

Henry Sydney we know already as a dissolute rake, abandoned to voluptuous indolence, charming to those who wanted to be amused, perilous

to those who had aught to lose which the splendid beau might covet.

Compton was the soldier-bishop. He marched about the duties of his holy office as though he had spurs on his heels and a cavalry sabre clanking at his side. Promotion for him had come in the form of a bishop's lawn instead of a command in the army, but his reverence was ever more at home on a powerful charger with pistols in the holsters than set upon his episcopal throne crowned with mitre and armed with crozier.

Russell was of the family of the Earls of Bedford. Like Sydney, he had once belonged to the Household of James. Like Sydney, too, one of his blood had suffered in the chastisement which followed the discovery of the Rye House plot. Most picturesque of Republicans, Algernon Sydney, brother of Henry, had died on the gallows for his convictions. At the same time judgment had fallen on Lord Russell, son of the aged Earl of Bedford. On her knees Lady Russell had supplicated with tears for her husband's life. It had been refused by Charles II., for once marble to the entreaties of distressed beauty. Now had the hour come when the Russells and the Sydneys might take their revenge.

Devonshire was already at war with the Court, so that he, too, in inviting a foreigner to invade

his country was not free from the suspicion of being moved by personal antipathies. The noble Cavendish was as proud as Louis XIV., as despotic as a Stuart. He had created a Court brawl, in which his share could not be forgiven by any king. A man named Colepepper had insulted the Earl at Whitehall. The matter was reported to the King, who forbade the offender the Court. Devonshire soon had reason, however, to feel himself slighted, for Colepepper was pardoned by the monarch and the Royal ban withdrawn long before the Earl had forgiven the affront.

At this juncture the feud was taken up by the Cavendish's retainers. They carried the war into the enemy's country, making a raid upon Colepepper's house and terrifying his family. Cavendish and Colepepper became for the time the Montagues and Capulets of London. The fiery Cavendish again went to Whitehall to pay his respects to their Majesties, and on whom should his eye light in the drawing-room but the detested Colepepper? It was an anxious moment for Cavendish's friends. In the haughty noble's eye there was a significant gleam as it rested on his enemy. Colepepper returned the glare with contempt—or so thought Cavendish, who restrained his fury in the Royal presence; but outside the storm broke. The Earl, mad with rage, clapped his hand on his sword-hilt and

called upon the other to fight. Colepepper hesitated. What would the King say were he to draw his sword and shed blood under the Royal roof? While he hesitated the wrathful Cavendish acted. A smashing blow across the face with his cane was Colepepper's chastisement. Instantly the whole Court was thrown into commotion. This was sacrilege, rank blasphemy. A lesser man than the Earl of Devonshire, one of the most powerful nobles in the land, would have slept that night in the Tower. As it was, he was cited before the King's Bench, and for his enormity mulcted in a fine of £30,000. Cavendish was rich—but £30,000! It was ruinous.

Devonshire, however, had an asylum where he was as safe from the King's writ as though he were a Highland laird with a stronghold in the heart of inaccessible wilds. He retired to Chatsworth. It was an inviolable sanctuary, for an enemy of his house could only enter it at the head of a conquering army. James wanted his soldiers for other purposes than the pursuit of imperious nobles to their castles in the provinces. If fighting there was to be, it should not be with a tenantry, mustering to protect the dignity of their lord from the arrogance of a law to which he was superior, for the simple reason that he was a Cavendish. The fine was never paid. It was not perhaps intended

that it ever should. The Earl's pardon was obtained by his mother.

The venerable lady bore to the Royal presence-chamber invincible title-deeds to the Royal gratitude—guarantees of Royal favour which no Stuart could look upon without emotion.

The Dowager-Countess produced bonds for enormous sums endorsed by Charles I. and Charles II. James looked upon them, and though the might of England was at his back he must have felt a poor man that this gallant race was not enlisted beneath his banner. Generous to their last piece, loyal to the last drop of blood in their veins, fearless beyond the tameless lion of the jungle, what might he not dare with this breed at his right hand! Walled cities should fall, armies vanish, before the dare-devil who would draw the sword in anger in the galleries of Whitehall.

The aged supplicant saw the King's emotion, and if she was silent it was because the word she would speak was a magic symbol, a talisman to be invoked, not for the sake of gold, though that gold would fill the Treasury. It was a word to buy the priceless favour of a life.

"Gainsborough!"

That was the word, the talisman. "Gainsborough!" There it was that Charles Cavendish, her brother-in-law, had fallen, as behoved one of

his line, fighting for the Crown. And James, looking upon the noble dame, remembered!

Her errand was accomplished. The Earl was released on terms. But for King James no sword would he ever unsheath. And worse still than the loss of such a friend was the misfortune that should have transformed him into an implacable enemy. . . .

Hither bold knight of romance! On his brow no cloud for wrong done, or for the future solicitude. Let the heralds proclaim his titles to fame, and when they have done you salute the gallant, laughing Shrewsbury. His honours were won in the field of love, amidst the darts shot quivering from lovely eyes in court and mansion, and for his conquests they called him "King of Hearts." A king has a code of his own, and so had His Majesty, Charles Talbot, of Shrewsbury, the twelfth Earl. Rich in hereditary distinctions, in intellect, in the capacity for enjoyment, his domain was the Garden of Pleasure, and his creed was the creed of that ever-elusive appanage. In his veins ran the noblest blood in England, spurring him to gallant deeds, but his heart beat, and his eyes sparkled too, because of a vagrant strain that poisoned all the rest like drops of luscious, languorous, intoxicating elixir. The blood of long generations of cavaliers, ever foremost in the field, ever faithful at home, mingled

in the elegant King of Hearts with that of the frailest of women, the beautiful countess of his chivalrous father.

With her had fallen in love the Duke of Buckingham, most successful of libertines, and most audacious too. There was a duel; and Earl Francis lay dead upon the field. As his eyes glazed and fixed in death his Countess stood by the Duke's horse in the glade, clad in man's attire. They say that while the father of her son expired, the fickle beauty opened her arms to the victorious Duke, and turned her sweetest smiles upon one whose hands were dripping with the gore of the gentleman whom once she had loved. The infant grew to manhood. He was a Shrewsbury in the way he won upon men, a Buckingham in his conquests amongst women. His intellect set off his engaging manners; his manners, his brilliant intellect. He would have conquered more than hearts, but the son was heir to the mother's craze for the wine of life, for the places where the sunbeams danced, chasing away the shadows.

His father was a Catholic. The young Earl had, however, no partiality for his father's faith. For his edification a disputation was arranged. When it was done he declared against Rome. In an age of rakes he was a true child of the age. Handsome, cultivated, entertaining, a man

of the world and a man of taste, William can have derived but small satisfaction from his countenance. Halifax, Nottingham, Godolphin, Rochester, Clarendon—these were types of the men the Dutch Prince looked for as allies, men renowned in politics, not heroes of the boudoir or of the gambling tables.

Halifax, however, was cautious and self-centred. He had no appetite for the Tower, none for the crash of the battlefield. He had waved his hat above his head and led the cheers when the bishops were acquitted. That was the distance he would go to wreak vengeance on the King. In his heart of hearts little did he care whether William stayed or came; and as for leading a troop, life had sweeter uses than that for the fastidious nobleman. To Nottingham it was not a matter of taste. It was a question of conscience. Nottingham's conscience was one of the political factors of the day. Happy in so rare a possession, the austere Earl never permitted himself to escape from it. He balanced the King's misdeeds against the King's right, and "Don Dismalo," as they called him, much against his will decided in favour of James.

Rochester and Clarendon, whether from love or a sense of duty, or from motives of self-interest, stood by the King. Neither owed much to James. Having served him loyally, they had

been sacrificed through the duplicity of Sunderland. But now, when the opportunity for revenge presented itself, they refused to set James's one act of folly and ingratitude against the friendship and consideration of years. They were for the King. And so their names were denied to William's cause. Godolphin likewise held aloof. He was false, as almost all those around him were false. He wished, when the Revolution came, to have friends in either camp, and be in a position to ride with either when he should see how flowed the tide of battle. He was one of the last to desert James, but not too late to be unwelcome to William.

And what of Anne while the conspiracy moved to its climax, and men spoke in parables, fearful lest the walls should hear? For James was not a dead King yet, but a man of iron will—the master of Jeffreys.

Anne at the Cockpit was passing through days the most anxious in her whole life. She trembled at her own shadow. At every key that grated in the lock, at every bolt shot roughly to its socket, her heart leaped to her mouth. Not for the Crown of England would she stand before the King with her perfidy revealed. One spark of filial sentiment still flickered in her heart, and warned her that she would die of shame and fear should she be summoned to the King's presence

to see his face turned to flint, and hear herself denounced as traitress from lips as cold as clay. Hence her name was not appended to the invitation to the Prince.

Rumours of the warlike preparations proceeding in Holland were, in September, on every man's lips. The King himself, one of the last men to believe what was coming, was no longer blind to the truth. One day Anne presented herself at Court to find her father so agitated that his distress could not be concealed.

At the spectacle of her father's sufferings, sufferings which she knew were but beginning, some pang of remorse may have touched her breast, for she confided to her uncle, Lord Clarendon, the unhappy plight in which she had discovered him. Clarendon begged of her, in the great calamity which now overshadowed her family, to rise to the obligations of a Princess of England, and the still nobler duties of a daughter. He implored of her to tell her father what no man had the honesty, the courage, to tell him, that his Crown was trembling on his brow, that in city and country the common talk was treason, that it would need the valour of his trustiest officers, the wisdom of his own ablest friends, to save him from the dangers combining to accomplish his ruin. Clarendon spoke sadly. Hope was dead within him, for who could save a king

who would not move a hand to save himself? Anne heard with impatience. Clarendon was in despair, for Anne was his last resource. She was the one person in the world who, by her tears and entreaties, could have crumbled to dust the rock of the King's impregnable obstinacy.

Perhaps it was too late to stave off ruin. Perhaps the Princess would have wept in vain at her father's feet. But a sign there was that his pride was not impervious to the gathering omens. He ordered the Privy Council to take evidence concerning the birth of his son, so that the truth might be put before the sceptics in a manner to silence unbelief. At the head of the Council the King waited on Anne to present her with copies of the depositions. For a King thus to approach a subject was a touching act of humility. From a father to a daughter it was heroic. A nobler woman would have melted into tears at this act of self-abnegation. Here was the father crucifying his pride to placate his daughter, in a desperate effort to safeguard his son. The trappings of State were there to hide, if hide they could, the insult to the King and Queen. There were, besides the Privy Councillors, the great officers of the household of the King and of the Princess, gentlemen-in-waiting and ladies-in-waiting—a brave audience for an ordeal which

the meanest subject in the land might scorn to suffer for a crown! And this was the James who exclaimed that compromise was the ruin of his father, that unflinchingly he would pursue the straight road on which he had embarked, whithersoever it might end. And Anne accepted the papers from the Council bowing down before her, as though she were a queen and that this act of homage were her right.

What would not James have given at that moment to see her break through the cold forms of etiquette, and tearing the papers to fragments, cast them on the floor, exclaiming that in her heart were the proofs of her father's honour, that every drop of blood in her veins attested his truth, that to offer her proofs that her brother was her brother was to heap insult on the whole Royal line, and deny to her race one sentiment of chivalry! Urged by an ungovernable impulse, one could imagine Anne flinging herself into her father's arms, and, overcome at the indignities heaped upon him, forgetting the pomp of Court ceremonial in the first overpowering grief of newly awakened love. But the King, hungering for one word of unrestrained sympathy, heard this formal reply from his idolised Anne:

"My lords, this was not necessary; for I have so much duty for the King, that his word is more to me than all these depositions!"

Spoken like a diplomatist, Princess. Many of the gentlemen who heard you must have been smitten with admiration, for not Sunderland himself could have surpassed such courtly roguery.

The King and the Royal procession withdrew, and Clarendon waited on Anne to discover the impression which had been made upon her. Surely there now remained no excuse for suspicion. But Anne was silent. She would not speak the truth, yet she dare not lie. The depositions which had been handed to her in State were likewise published to the world. But the world had already made up its mind, and, like the King's daughters, would not be shaken by the testimony of angels.

There came at this time, when the foundations of the Throne were crumbling away, another proof of James's awakening. Sunderland had cast a spell upon James. While amassing wealth at the expense of France, and conciliating Orange through his wife, this superlative actor was nevertheless the King's beau ideal of a minister. He showered honours on him. He knew him to be accumulating wealth. It was all well-deserved, right trusty Sunderland! But there were limits to the Royal folly. And though the King was to all seeming stone-blind, yet there are things palpable even to the blind.

One of Lady Sunderland's communications to Henry Sydney was intercepted by an enemy and brought to James. The King was dumbfounded. The letter told him all—Lady Sunderland was a spy, Henry Sydney a traitor, and Lord Sunderland. . . . What of Lord Sunderland? The Earl and Countess were equal to their misfortune. The lady protested that the letter was a forgery. It was the handiwork of some enemy who, jealous of her place in the Royal favour, would rob her of both place and reputation. The Earl rose to more dramatic heights. With a voice carefully modulated to control his honest emotion, he appealed to the King to remember his unhappy domestic position.

"Even if this is Lady Sunderland's hand," he said, "that is no affair of mine. Your Majesty knows my domestic misfortunes. The footing on which my wife and Mr. Sydney are is but too public. Who can believe that I would make a confidant of the man who has injured my honour in the tenderest point, of the man whom of all others I ought most to hate?"

It was a defence which, coming from an honoured lieutenant, the King did not care to examine too closely. James said no more. But for Sunderland the beginning of the end had come. In the general crash his fall was to be

the first, but too late to check the consequences of his long career of treachery. One day he was summoned to the Royal presence. No letter was put into his hands, no evidence was adduced, no arguments advanced, no charges made. The King dropped a hint of disloyalty and dismissed his minister. That was all. Sunderland's energies were not paralysed by his years of deception. He still had the enthusiasm necessary to a crisis, the enthusiasm which gave his lies the colour of immaculate truth. He protested, he reasoned; with a terrible malediction he invoked Heaven to bear witness to his innocence. If he had sinned, might he be carried a corpse from the sight of the King!

Like all men who trust blindly, James, when his faith was shaken, felt himself doubly a victim, the victim of his betrayer and the victim of himself. It was bad enough that Sunderland had sold him. But not so bad as that he had sold himself. He looked back and saw himself day by day meeting this man like a brother. Vain fool that he was not to have learned the worth, in all his years, of a handsome face and fair words. He had sat down to a banquet with robbers, and, assuming them to be gentlemen, had left his purse and his mantle in the ante-chamber. Purse and mantle were gone. They had risen from table now, and, too late, he

saw through his comrades. He knew his lesson now; but in puzzling through it backwards the knowledge had come too late, for the flag of Orange was already broken to the wind, and his ships were streaming over the sea to England.

## CHAPTER XVII

IN the camp of the King all slept save the sentinels and the traitors, and the rattle of the chains of the troop horses picketed in the cavalry lines was the only sound that disturbed the silence of the November night.

The chivalry of England were mustered on Salisbury Plain to meet an invader. But when these men's fathers were under arms to encounter their brethren in defence of King Charles a blither spirit possessed them than now that they were to measure swords with a foreign foe.

The spirit of gloom hovered over the camp. No snatch of merry song from roystering trooper returning to the lines, and braving in his cups the wrath of the provost-marshal, broke the stillness of the lonely night. The echo of jest and prank over cards and bottle did not guide one to the tents of the younger officers. The shadow of impending disaster was everywhere weighing down the most volatile, damping the most joyous spirits. It was whispered through

the camp that the King was ill. He had been bleeding copiously from the nose, and was so weak that he could not hope to take the field as in the brave old days when he drew the sword under Turenne. And things more discouraging still were whispered. Treason was in the air. It hung like a miasma round the army. The honest men looked with doubt upon each other. They read parables into plain words, and saw innuendoes when all was open as noonday. Not so the rogues. They knew one another. They had sold themselves; and so that their chargers were safe and sound, ready for a dash at a moment's warning to the Williamite lines, they could await the inevitable with equanimity.

The King was alone in the episcopal palace with his faithful general the Earl of Feversham. The table at which James had just supped with Prince George, Lord Churchill, and a party of his leading officers, was now littered with maps and papers. But the maps stared neglected at the Sovereign and his commander-in-chief. What need had they of maps? The council of war was over. They spoke now of politics rather than of strategy. They were in their own land, amongst soldiers who knew every rood of the country. Never was there a simpler problem in tactics presented to a monarch. Hurl his troops against the enemy. Press home the attack till,

hand to hand, Briton and Dutchman wrestled for victory; and if the gods willed the battle to the stranger, then die like a king fighting for his Crown. Nothing could be simpler. But alas! heart and nerve failed the doomed King, and the golden moments given him for action were frittered away.

What secrets were exchanged that night between the King and the Earl can be surmised, for Feversham had the true instinct of a soldier for an honest gentleman. And he knew that close by the Royal pavilion were the quarters of a traitor whose treason was black as ingratitude could make it.

To the King he dare not mention that name. But it trembled on his lips, and one can picture the Sovereign's impatience as he noted the other's hesitation. And one can pardon the Earl's rigid lips, for the words struggling for utterance would kill a man's honour—a murder more atrocious in the eyes of a gallant veteran than a deed of blood. From a chance phrase in a letter of the period one can easily reconstruct the scene:

"Speak, man!" murmured the King implor-ingly rather than in a tone of command, for somehow these latter days had mellowed the imperious note in his voice.

But Feversham did not speak. If only the King's intuition would help him! But when did

James's intuition ever help him to recognise an enemy? Nothing but infamy patent to all the world could James interpret aright. . . . Feversham, like a good general, would try to escape from his difficulty by a flanking movement.

"There was Sunderland . . ." he would begin.

"Yes, but Sunderland is in disgrace," would reply the King. "His power for evil is at an end."

"Yes, sire; but . . . there are others as near . . . more dear, perhaps."

The King would look chagrined, as well he might. He had been a fool. He wished others did not see it so clearly. But Feversham was a good friend, if a friend were left to him, if friendship there really were, and he must not show pique at his candour.

"Speak, my dear Feversham. I am tired of vague hints. . . . I am ill"; and ill indeed he was. The bleeding at the nose, which had continued for three days, had drained him of all vigour, and left him for the nonce a wreck—hollow of eye, feeble of voice, more fitted for an invalid's retreat than to give ardour to an army over which was creeping the lethargy of despair.

A moment's silence. Then a name passed Feversham's lips.

The King sprang to his feet.

"Again that name! . . . Did I hear aright?"

"Churchill!" cried Feversham doggedly, in a voice that might be heard by the guards outside.

The King laughed mockingly.

"Churchill, my page of long ago! . . . Gallant Jack! . . . Bah! He is my son. I made him. As soon would I think of suspecting my daughter Anne."

"I beg you, sire, to have Churchill arrested. He is a traitor."

"This is madness, Feversham. Your anxiety about us has unbalanced your judgment. If Churchill be a traitor, then on Salisbury Plain to-night there sleeps not an honest man."

Feversham had served for many a year in the Royal household, had risked his life for the Crown on the battlefield, and now, strong in the consciousness of his own loyalty, strong in the knowledge that the flight of brief days would prove the truth of his words, the sincerity of his appeal, he flung himself on his knees before the King. With passionate entreaties he begged of James to secure Churchill. He begged as though it were his own life and fortune that were at stake. But to all his prayers there was but one answer: "Of Churchill I can believe nothing ill."

Oh, that blind, unreasoning obstinacy against which nothing could prevail! For two hours the conflict lasted, the battle of King and general,

the one fighting in the cause of prudence, the other in the cause of chivalry and loyalty; and in the end the King was as immovable as ever.

"Of Churchill I can believe nothing ill. . . . Good-night, my trusty Feversham; good-night."

And with heavy steps, as though with an effort he held himself erect, the King dragged himself to his bedchamber.

. . . . .

"Who goes there?"

The challenge rang out on the morning air from a patrol of the Orange army, which by now had thrown out its advanced posts to Wincanton, and scoured the country with flying pickets still farther east.

Along the road in the grey light rode wearily two men, whose uniforms and spirited chargers betokened high rank. They heard the challenge and saw the levelled muskets, which gave it ominous import.

Jaded indeed he was if the younger man did not laugh. It would be the true answer of his temperament to the challenge and the muskets. The other was a soldier, not a devil-may-care child of love, a man intent on high enterprises, with a laugh ready only when it had its proper place in the unravelling of his schemes. He answered: "Friends!"

"Advance and give the countersign!"

And the pair trotted slowly forward. There was no need for haste now. The deed was done; their vows were broken. They were deserters in the camp of the enemy.

During the night Lord Churchill and his companion, the young Duke of Grafton—for the horsemen were none other—had ridden out from Salisbury and sought the camp of William. There Churchill had a welcome which did credit to the soldierly spirit of his new comrades. They made use of him, but they despised him. General Schomberg received the distinguished deserter with a taunt which would have killed a man of finer temper.

"Sir," said the gallant soldier of fortune, "you are the first deserter of the rank of a lieutenant-general I ever saw!"

To the Duke of Grafton, son of Charles II. and Barbara Villiers, Duchess of Cleveland, it was an amusing adventure. As an officer he was of small value to his uncle, and as little to his kinsman of Orange. But rank and fortune, a gay spirit, a sharp tongue, and débonnaire manners always have a charm, which, if they do not win battles, entertain the camp and have for the soldiery a greater attraction than qualities more sterling. His impudent repartee on an historic occasion illustrates the easy, careless temper of Grafton. When nobles and bishops

petitioned James to call a free Parliament and open negotiations with the Prince of Orange the Duke was one of the signatories.

To him the King said, "You know nothing about religion, you care nothing about it, and yet, forsooth, you must pretend to have a conscience."

"It is true, sire," answered Grafton, with keen relish of the joke, "that I have very little conscience; but I belong to a party which has a great deal!"

Heartily must Grafton have enjoyed the humiliation put upon Churchill by the grizzled war-dog who commanded William's soldiery. In the Orange camp Grafton found a young man after his own heart in the person of Edward, Viscount Cornbury, eldest son of Lord Clarendon, and, like himself, a cousin of the Princess Anne.

The distinction of having been the first deserter from the King belongs to Cornbury. He had been sent on to Salisbury with the van of the Royal army while yet the King remained behind at Whitehall. Cornbury, though only a colonel, found himself, therefore, by the connivance of his fellow-conspirators, commanding officer for a brief space of the King's camp. The Viscount rose to his opportunity for earning indelible infamy. He paraded three regiments of cavalry

and marched them westwards. The men were in high spirits, going out to engage the enemy, as they thought, under this enterprising young chief. They reached Blandford, then Dorchester, then Axminster.

This was indeed a reconnaissance which seemed to lead far from Salisbury, far from the banner of the King. The more experienced officers began to feel apprehensive. Mustering up courage, they approached Cornbury, and begged to know whither they were being led. Cornbury was a shallow-witted fellow, who owed all his honours to his relationship to the Princess Anne. But his intellect was spurred to resourcefulness by his danger. He explained that he had been ordered to make a night attack on an Orange post at Honiton.

His brother officers were dismayed. To their military instincts it sounded a ludicrous affair, bound to end in disaster. Cornbury was requested to produce his orders. That demand crushed his daring scheme for riding into William's camp with the flower of the Royal army. He was glad, therefore, to steal away with a handful of men to the Dutch lines, while the gallant fellows he had so nearly betrayed returned to Salisbury to report that a kinsman of the King had shown the road to the King's enemy.

When news of Cornbury's desertion reached James he was still at Whitehall. It was a stunning blow. Men who fight on to the end and win or die right royally, kings in victory, kings in defeat, kings even in fetters, are ever spared this blow—of all others the most overwhelming—of being betrayed by one's own household.

Cornbury was the premier renegade. He was, perhaps, of all his connections held in the least regard by the King. And with the perfect dramatic touch which Fate alone imparts, the last exquisite pain which completed the agony was inflicted by Anne, the dearest of them all.

A memorable scene was enacted in Whitehall when James heard of Cornbury's treachery. All the leading officers then in London were summoned to the Palace. Bravely they trooped in, Churchill and Grafton leading the way, at their heels Kirke and Trelawney and many others. It was a mournful yet a stirring sight. Handsome Churchill, reckless Grafton, dour Trelawney, and Kirke with the murderous face of that type of soldier who knows neither fear, nor love, nor pity. His was a name to make men's blood run cold. He was to the army what Jeffreys was to the bench ; and looking upon him now in that group of officers bowing before the King, one imagines that his comrades stand a little apart

from him; not much, for Kirke was not a man to be trifled with. But often in a hair's breadth there is a wide world of significance.

The King was too overcome for a moment to speak; but when he recovered command of himself, deep feeling moved him to strike a note of Royal chivalry.

Was there amongst them any man who, for conscientious reasons, was averse to drawing the sword in his service? Then let him resign his commission. Sorry he would be to lose a gentleman amongst them all. But they had reached a stern pass. Before taking another step let them be blunt Englishmen, and fair as man to man. If they would choose a road that was not his, then let them do so. But as English gentlemen, as English cavaliers, in the name of God let them be worthy of their blood, of their cloth, of their country. . . .

Rising to his full height, throwing back his head, glancing over them with something of the fire of his soldierly youth, he exclaimed:

"As gentlemen, as soldiers, I adjure you that there be no other Cornbury!"

Then up spoke Churchill. He would shed the last drop of his blood for his master; and he turned to his companions as though he would challenge one amongst them to forswear his true allegiance.

Grafton repeated the challenge in his own audacious way. He, too, would die for the King his uncle.

The other traitors were not less bold in their deception. They all protested their devotion to their Sovereign. Heaven heard it all and saw their hearts, and not one amongst them dropped dead with the lie on his lips as a warning to his companions.

And then they trooped out as bravely as they had come, to take the road to Salisbury, the straight road, as we have seen, to the camp of Orange.

At the defection of Churchill the unhappy King was smitten with panic. Churchill, the ablest of his captains, the young friend he loved, was a host in himself. Immediately he ordered a retreat, and retired to Andover. There he supped with Prince George and the young Duke of Ormonde.

It was a funereal meal, for the guests were pledged to betray the man with whom they were breaking bread. The King spoke of traitors and treachery. It was the topic of the hour. Nothing was so urgent or so opportune. Of Churchill, perhaps, he could not speak. The name would choke him. But if it never passed his lips, one may be sure it haunted his aching brain. From Grafton better could not be

expected. The Stuart blood ran in his veins. But in his veins, too, there ran the Villiers strain, for his mother was the kinswoman of the tribe who gave to the Orange household Elizabeth, and to the Cockpit Lady Fitzharding.

But if the King's thoughts turned to persons whose names he would not utter, he could dissemble his torture by diverting the conversation to the Princess Anne, lonely but faithful in the great wilderness of Whitehall with the unhappy Queen.

While they supped from time to time a courier arrived from the army, always with the same tidings. It was not that English blood had been spilled in some desperate fight; it was not that his best friends, his familiar comrades, had fallen. That was grief reserved by fate for happier kings than James. The news was always worse than death—always treachery! One was gone, and another, and another, until it looked as if Whitehall had been transferred to the Orange camp.

The King was perhaps too ill to realise what all this meant. There comes a time when some anodyne of Nature numbs the heart to pain and blunts the intelligence.

The King and Ormonde heard the news in gloomy silence. But not so Prince George.

What elfish sprite tempted the foolish man to talk that night? The King did not expect it from him. Neither his wit nor his wisdom was of the order to make them eager for his words.

"*Est-il possible?*" was George's comment as a traitor's name was announced, like a visitor to some strange levee.

"*Est-il possible?*" he repeated again and again.

So the solo went on, always on the same note, growing farcical in its inane monotony at the supreme moment when a dynasty was tottering to its final collapse.

A shadow of a smile flickered on the King's ashen lips at this parrot-cry of sympathy famine-stricken for words. He seldom smiled now. He had forgotten how to laugh. But this was surpassingly ridiculous. It was droll enough to set a man of steady nerves and bounding pulse and clear brain into roars of laughter. The King looked at Ormonde. His Majesty could not preserve a straight face. In presence of such a comical effusion of sympathy men of sense were brothers, linked by the freemasonry of a common appreciation of the grotesque, and Ormonde smiled too.

At length the mourning feast was over. The King rose, and with a subdued but kindly "Good-night" to his faithful friends, all the

more precious because so few remained, he retired.

Again the clatter of horses' hoofs.

What was that? A courier perhaps. But James was too weary, too broken in spirit to inquire. He was ill and tired. Nothing mattered much. There was no urgency about anything. It was all for a Crown, and of what value was a Crown! . . . He slept at last, this sorely tried, heart-sick King, and with the sun awoke from his troubled slumber. Then they told him.

Ormonde was gone, and with him the husband of his beloved Anne.

Then the King made the only jest of these days of wrath.

"What!" he exclaimed, "'*Est-il possible?*' gone too!"

From a photograph by Emery Walker, after the painting in the National Portrait Gallery
Sir Godfrey Kneller.

JAMES II.

p. 268.

## CHAPTER XVIII

INTO St. James's Park at dead of night strode two men equipped for riding, as one might see despite the heavy cloaks drawn closely around them as protection from the rain, which came pelting down in blinding sheets.

At Charing Cross they had left their hackney coach to make this adventure into the pitch darkness of the Park, which at this hour was none too safe for lonely excursions; nor in such weather was it any too pleasant, for its avenues, lashed by the storm, were cut into quagmires, in which the cloaked pedestrians sank over the ankles of their riding-boots.

Without a word they trudged on, until right before them appeared in silhouette the Palace of Whitehall. Then they halted, and, taking shelter as well as they could beneath a tree, watched the Royal Palace, whose outlines, unrelieved by a solitary light, were traced through the blackness like a vast palace of mystery.

Soaked almost to the skin from the drenching storm, and chilled to the bone from standing in the

mire, they had no imagination for the romance of the scene in which they found themselves. There was no glamour for them in the inky sky, from which battlements, towers, and gables seemed suspended, the guardian ramparts of a city where darkness and silence for ever reigned, where life was a dream and sound there was none.

"A light! Thank Heaven! . . . It is a signal," would exclaim one.

"Thank Heaven!" would repeat the other.

The rain came pelting down more fiercely than ever, imparting fervour to their gratitude.

The welcome light flickered in the Cockpit. It was a signal that the vigil was nearly ended.

The light appeared and disappeared and reappeared. To those who could read the sign it told its own tale as it flashed from the windows of the Princess Anne's private apartments into the blinding storm without. It told of an excited mistress just risen from her couch trembling and expectant, of flurried ladies-in-waiting racing to and fro for this thing so treasured and for that, all the while with everybody's heart in everybody's mouth, fingers twitching with nervousness too great for nimble obedience, and feet more restless than efficient in the haste of breathless agitation.

The two men listened intently. The wind hurtling through the trees, and the rain splashing on withered and soddened leaves, deadened

every sound. They thought they heard faintly the treble of women's voices. A door opened at last. Now they were sure their hearing did not deceive them, because they could see the panel of light, the only bright thing against the confused tumuli of blackness. A lady stepped into the luminous panel. It was a figure gracious enough to cheer the watchers out in the inhospitable night. It was the Princess Anne. They might have seen her shiver as the rain, caught up by the storm, was driven into her teeth, one gust almost saturating her light attire; for, unused to such adventures, Anne had thought more of appearances than of the most suitable raiment in which to brave a November storm. Into the light from outside the threshold stepped two other ladies; they carried cloaks and wraps, and hastily they enfolded the Princess more securely against the night. Then the lights went out. The watchers knew the door was closed, and that the King's daughter had begun her flight.

Descending the flight of private stairs, which some time before Anne had caused to be erected from her private apartments into the Park, and accompanied by Lady Churchill, the latter's maid, and Lady Fitzharding, the Princess hurried forward to the assignation. At the same time from out of the shelter of the trees advanced the two cavaliers. They threw back their cloaks and

raised their laced hats, revealing themselves as Compton, Bishop of London, and Charles Sackville, Earl of Dorset.

It was no time for compliments. Whitehall still held trusty servants of the King. Even in the Cockpit, not many yards away, there were men and women who if they knew of the treachery afoot would alarm the Palace, and Anne would find herself a prisoner, where an hour or two before she had been little less than a Sovereign. With whispered words the party turned their backs upon the Cockpit towards Charing Cross.

It was a short, forced march, but a rough one. At every step they sank over their ankles in the soft earth. The Princess's spirits rose with the excitement of this novel battle with wind and rain as she followed in the steps of all the Royal ladies who, down along through the centuries, had crept at night from their bowers to win a page in the annals of romance.

Struggling forward more vigorously, talking a trifle more loudly as the distance between them and the Palace increased, the Princess at last met with a mishap which for a moment was as though the skirmishers of an army had been driven back on the main body. The advance was checked. A council of war was held, for the Princess had lost a shoe.

Oh, dear! Oh, dear! where was that shoe—a

beautiful high-heeled shoe, lined with silk, with tapering instep, and dainty toe embroidered with deft stitching? Oh, yes, here it is! But alas! no longer a dainty shoe, for the high heel is gone, buried away somewhere in the mire of the Park; and if this is silk lining it no longer glistens with the fine lustre given it by some famous loom of Lyons, for the inside is full of the damp clay that made captive the heel. It is a worthless shoe, save as a relic to some courtier who knows his courtly trade, or to a gallant who would sell his life for such a thing, though mayhap he would prefer a piece of ribbon fresh and gay or a scrap of filmy lace.

Down poured the rain; but if ever wit, and gallant and haughty gentleman was superior to the batteries of unkind fortune it was Charles Sackville. Amongst the men who had been sparkling blades of the Restoration Lord Dorset stood alone. In the school of profligacy he at least had learned something. When his *devoirs* had been paid to vice and frivolity, he remained superior to his follies. Sydney was a rake to the end. James was the victim of an eternal war, in which his soul was alternately ravaged by angels and demons. Sunderland grew into a gambler noted for his greed, Talbot into a bully, Jermyn into a place-man, and so on with all that rattling company.

But Dorset, if he did not himself learn to be wise, learned to value wisdom and to appreciate it. His sins were stepping-stones to grace; and Dorset as a fellow of years and sense was, unlike his early associates, more charming than in the days when he beat the watch and laid siege to the heart of Mistress Nell. For Nell Gwynne loved Charles, Earl of Dorset, before she won her meed of the Merrie Stuart's abounding affections. And grateful for patronage which advanced her fortunes, as poor Nell understood the term, she always called him her "Charles the First." This was long ago, however. Dorset was no longer the bold and wicked knight of Nell's riotous novitiate to fame. He was a middle-aged man, to whom a runaway princess might safely entrust her honour, even if a bishop were not by to bless and countenance her confidence.

But the Princess has one foot unshod! Poor Anne! a sorry portrait of dignity you present in the pitch dark amidst the mire of St. James's Park under the walls of Whitehall, with the clouds wide open pouring on your foolish head torrents of rain. With a hand on Dorset's arm she hopped along on one foot. Dorset laughed. His lordship had a perfect appreciation of the ridiculous. He would have laughed if it were a funeral procession. It was delicious. Anne hopping the whole way from the Palace to

Charing Cross would make the occasion a memorable pilgrimage. They were all wet to the skin already. With Anne setting the pace they would however have time to get dry, supposing the storm abated, before reaching their destination. Anne laughed too. In her mirth there was perhaps a hint of hysteria. But the Earl, thankful for the mood, encouraged it. Through the storm Sarah Churchill, trudging angrily behind, could perhaps hear a monologue something of this kind delivered with playful spirit:

"Well hopped, madam! . . . Mind that pool. . . . Egad, you're into it right up to your knees. . . . Ahem! ankles! . . . Put spring into it, madam. . . . Lean on me. . . . Well over, indeed! That was a yawning gulf. . . . The other shoe gone. . . . The Lord split me, but I never. . . . Your shoemaker is a Papist, I'll pledge my oath. . . . Here's a hole, madam, deep enough to bury a bishop. . . . Where's your waist, madam? . . . In this infernal darkness one can see nothing pleasing. . . . Pardon my arm, but this is a chasm to be taken flying. . . . Now for the hop of your life. There!"

A little scream from Anne. The hop of her life was a failure.

"La, madam, what is it?" and Sarah, hurrying to her mistress's side, would glare at Dorset,

for her soaking garments would not assist the termagant lady-in-waiting to laughter. But there was the warlike bishop ready with his pistols for any villain who might dare to interrupt their progress.

There was, however, no villain in this comedy, at least none that the bishop could recognise. Following the Princess's eyes, they saw her shoeless foot cased in a miry silk stocking, and the whole company—even Sarah's waiting-maid in the background—joined in a sympathetic "Oh, madam!" Dorset leading the chorus in a voice blended of pity and merriment.

Anne's shoeless foot was not only wet, it was getting a mud bath. The Earl was on his knee in a moment. The dainty foot with the dripping wet stocking of silk stained with the soddened earth was made captive by the gallant Dorset, who substituted his long leathern glove for the vagabond shoe.

Now was Anne equipped for the march, and all etiquette being banished by this piece of comedy, the Earl, half carrying the Princess, they hurried forward to Charing Cross. There the ladies were bundled into the coach, and, accompanied by Dorset and the bishop, they were driven to Aldersgate Street, where Compton had his private house. The City was, however, too near to Whitehall to be an agreeable place of

sojourn. The bishop's house was a convenient station at which to get a little refreshment and rest, and what was still more urgently needed, a change of attire. When they again took the road Compton was no longer the cloaked ecclesiastic. All disguise was thrown off, and in buff-coat, jack-boots, and broad-sword he was again the life-guardsman, military chief of the little party which now set out for Copt Hall, Dorset's seat in Waltham Forest. The Princess's destination was Nottingham. The greater portion of the journey was made on horseback. Haste was everything, and a journey by coach over the roads of the period could not be accomplished at a speed which would allay the Princess's apprehensions. The only alternative was to ride on a pillion behind a gentleman, horses being hired along the road as the party required them.

A famine in horseflesh seems to have fallen at this time on Leicester. Not a steed in the town could be found to carry cavalier and lady. This was nearly as bad as that other check in St. James's Park, when the storm left her barefoot, and the situation was only saved by Dorset's good-humoured gallantry. Now there came to the rescue a very different type of cavalier. Of all the chivalry of the good town of Leicester the Bayard was a mercer, and Bayard's fat grey mare, broad of back, short of limb,

large of head, and very sober, was the steed offered for the Royal service. Mettle the Princess's palfrey had none. But the mercer's simple and sturdy rule had taught her ways more sagacious than were ever the dowry of a mare of purest Arab blood. When the time came for her to be burdened she made obeisance on her knees, and in this position waited for gentleman and Princess to mount. The mercer was so corpulent he could get into the saddle in no other way. Thus it came about that a peculiarity which had hitherto been the occasion of much amusement to the apprentices of Leicester, and of irritation to the prosperous mercer, became now a reason for loyal pride to himself and his family, while it justified the everlasting malignity of slimmer citizens, whose lean hacks had robbed their masters of a place in history.

At the rendezvous at Nottingham Anne found herself the centre of a group of prominent noblemen and gentlemen, all eager to secure her favour, to which they now attached a degree of worth, more gratifying to the Royal lady's vanity than to their own acumen. This would apply rather to the country gentlemen than to noblemen like Northampton, Devonshire, and Chesterfield, who here welcomed the fugitives. Some of the simpler folk may even have imagined that the turmoil was to end in Anne becoming the Sovereign.

The militia and yeomanry gathered round her with enthusiasm, and it was with a considerable military force that she continued her adventures.

It was a triumphal progress from Nottingham to Leicester. But on the Princess's return to the friendly mercer's town an incident occurred which gave to the army a sullen princess. It took place in the Princess's drawing-room. Compton, in the presence of Anne, and in the hearing of all the gentlemen present, called upon Chesterfield to attend a meeting in the afternoon in the service of Her Highness.

"I am here to protect the Princess," replied Chesterfield in effect, "but I must beg not to be publicly summoned to conferences without having first been consulted privately in the matter."

Devonshire, who stood by, took upon himself to answer Chesterfield.

"I thought," he said, "that Lord Chesterfield had been previously acquainted that the purpose of the Princess was to have an association entered into to destroy all the Papists in England in case the Prince of Orange should be murdered by any of them."

Every eye there was turned on Devonshire, Chesterfield, and Compton. The soldier-bishop, purple with rage, was ready to fell his adversary, and only restrained his anger out of deference for her in whose presence he had excited this quarrel.

A sneer curled Devonshire's lips. If James was the first to suffer the loss of his head through such an association, so much the better. He had patronised Colepepper, and a Cavendish's malevolence, if slow to be aroused, was not quickly assuaged. Chesterfield, calm and stern, spoke with ease and deliberation. His mind was made up. He would not join a murder society. He was for the Prince of Orange. He had been bred up with the Prince. He knew him, he would dare aver, better than any gentleman in that room, and he knew him to be a gallant soldier who would find an organisation for massacring innocent citizens little to his fancy.

"And," concluded Chesterfield, "I, at all events, shall none of it."

That was the beginning of the end of this proposal, which, made in cold blood in the presence of the Princess, takes one's breath away. Anne seems to have heard it with approval. With open-eyed astonishment that levee of English gentlemen looked from Anne to Cavendish, Cavendish to Compton, Compton to Chesterfield. They could not believe their senses. They were not out for murder. They were soldiers, they hoped they were patriots. Catholic gentlemen were their friends, ate at their tables, rode with them in the chase. Many of them had Catholic kinsmen. All of them had

a Catholic king. Assuredly they did not want to shed the blood of Papists save in a fair field, as behoved the sons of cavaliers. Almost to a man they were with Chesterfield, and the infamous proposal perished of contempt.

Very angry with the noble friend of the Prince of Orange, who had baulked her in this enterprise, Anne set out for the country in possession of the invaders, where Prince George, well satisfied with the success of the plans they had matured at the Cockpit, looked for her coming.

And now let us return and find the Cockpit on the morning following Anne's flight, with the dreary Park all leafless and draggled after the lashing of the storm.

The dripping trees spread their arms to the late autumn sun. Through the miry avenues pedestrians came and went. In and out through Whitehall wandered couriers, and officers, and loungers. The King was away in his camp, at the head of his soldiers, and a spirit of listlessness pervaded a scene where usually all was bustle and animation.

Suddenly a woman's screams rang out over the Palace gardens. The screams grew louder. The voices multiplied. It was not a frightened maid. It was not a wench startled by a mouse or a mischievous page. Scream followed scream. It was a panic. It was a fire in the Cockpit, or murder, or worse or . . .

How the loungers rushed to this festival of excitement, and for a rich reward!

Ladies in tears, with toilets all disarranged, raced from the Cockpit and shrieked like creatures possessed as they flew towards the Royal apartments. Like mad women they ran, wringing their hands, their yells ringing through the alleys and across the courts and lawns.

"The Princess! . . . Oh, the Princess! . . . the Princess!" they cried. The soldiers on guard dashed towards the Cockpit, Lord Craven at their head, sword in hand. But there was no assassin to slay while Royal blood still dyed his hands, no conspirator to arrest. It was only that the Princess's chamber was empty. And his lordship could only question the sentinels as to what they had seen or heard. While he asked questions a hundred lying rumours had already spread through London. The libellers had for months previously educated the people to believe that Mary of Modena struck the King. Now they said that her violence had driven Anne from the Palace, that this unhappy English Princess was an outcast because of the firebrand Italian. The women put their heads together and nodded and whispered.

". . . Soon to become a mother," one might be heard to say.

"Poor Anne!" another would reply, "to be

left at such a time at the mercy of a foreign devil with the temper of a virago whom no Petruchio could tame."

The rumoured state of Anne's health was as much a lie as the other stories. It was apparently circulated to increase the sympathy of the populace for the truant daughter, and exasperate them still more against her unfortunate father and stepmother.

While lies passed from lip to lip, news reached London that Prince George had set his wife the example of treachery. And while Londoners poured into the streets to gossip over this wrath that had fallen in such heavy measure on their Sovereign's house, the King himself, weak with illness, stained with travel, rode into the court-yard at Whitehall. He saw the commotion, the looks of blank despair that had followed the shrieks of the panic-stricken women.

"What is it?" he demanded.

They looked at one another dumb. . . . Who amongst them would dare to say it?

"Speak!" he commanded. And as he still was King they could not disobey and spare him. Then they told him that his beloved Anne was gone.

A cry as though he were stabbed to the heart escaped him.

"God help me," he moaned; "my own children have forsaken me!"

## CHAPTER XIX

SHELTERING as well as she could under the hoary walls of Lambeth church, a poor woman, with a child clasped to her bosom, stood on the bank of the Thames in the bitter cold of a December night. As the cutting wind blew over the swollen river she drew more closely around her the threadbare cloak which betokened her poverty, striving to protect the sleeping infant from the icy blast.

In the background were the villas of rich merchants of the City and of Southwark, the lights glowing warmly behind the casements at that late hour, showing that by many a fireside the spirit of Christmas rejoicing had already been kindled, and that old-time customs were being honoured, though Merrie England had fallen upon days of tumult.

Rising above the villas were here and there mansions of greater dignity, some of them the abodes of noblemen, while close at hand was an inn where travellers and watermen found refreshment and picked up news of the town.

Neither the grey old church, nor the Palace of Lambeth, rich in romantic lore, engaged the attention of the lonely woman shivering close by the ferry. She had no eyes for the villas of the rich or the mansions of the proud. Her heart was torn with anxiety, on the one hand for the little creature nestling for warmth to her bosom, and on the other for her husband, between whom and herself the river rolled, broad, and black, and menacing, racing silently away to the sea, and in some mysterious way beckoning her onwards into the darkness.

Across the glistening flood she could distinguish lights on the northern shore. There was one light above all. It was in Whitehall; and where that light was, there was the King. She watched it as the men out of the East watched of old the star they feared to lose, did they for a moment avert their gaze. As she tried to pierce the deep pall of gloom through which the river coursed, the light that fascinated her was blurred into a thousand beams, the reflection of her tears, tears for the lonely master of the Palace; for the poor woman in scanty attire and threadbare cloak, sheltering under the church, crouching from the wind, cowering at every footfall, was the Queen of England, and the infant in her arms was the Prince of Wales!

Mary Beatrice had just been ferried across the

river from Whitehall, and, clad like an Italian washerwoman, here she was shivering in the blast, awaiting the coach that was to convey her to Gravesend.

A little apart from the Queen was a group of ladies and a cavalier, the chivalrous Count de Lauzun, famous as the husband of Madame de Montpensier, who, with St. Victor, a gentleman of Avignon, had crossed the Channel to do battle, like true knights errant, for this distressed lady. St. Victor, who was garbed as a seaman, had run to the inn to bring up the coach which ought to have met them by the ferry. This gentleman of France was of the very mettle for so gallant an enterprise, for, besides the dash and courage of a soldier, he had the quick wit, the ready hand, the lithe foot of a D'Artagnan, born to confound single-handed whole armies. A prying ostler at the inn followed the coach and six horses as it swung out of the yard, bent upon discovering what passengers of consequence had landed from the ferry at that late hour. Though he carried a lantern, it did not save him from falling over St. Victor, who ran full tilt into his arms with all the awkwardness of these damned foreigners! Ostler and Frenchman and lantern rolled in the mud over and over; and when they had done rolling the lantern was extinguished.

"Ten thousand pardons," cried St. Victor, in broken English.

"A plague on you for a blind——" began the ostler, but St. Victor, covered with mud and wet to the skin after his adventure, hurried to the carriage, leaving him to finish at leisure his tirade of profanity. The Queen was already in her place. Lauzun, too, had mounted the coach, and St. Victor, flinging himself on a horse, brought up the rear of the cavalcade.

Galloping along the rugged road to Gravesend few words were spoken. The Frenchmen's right hands were seldom far away from their pistols. To them it was a ride through a land of barbarians. They could not be expected to realise that of the lusty fellows snoring on the river barges nine out of every ten would have died for Queen or Prince, though ready to slit a foreigner's throat. And of the travellers whom they passed on the road there was not one perhaps capable of even a harsh thought against the unhappy mother and babe, now leading the flight of the Stuarts which was to cut them off for ever from their inheritance.

The poor Queen was distraught. If the yacht should fail them at Gravesend the Prince might be taken from her arms, and her own fate be that of Mary of Scotland. If the yacht were there in obedience to the King's command, soon

she would be far away from the husband she so passionately adored.

Her Majesty was roused at length from the reverie of despair by the warning of her companions that they had concluded the first stage in their flight. They took the Prince from her and transformed him, as well as they could, into a bundle of linen. Fervently the ladies prayed that no cry from the bundle would reveal its secret. Then some finishing touches were given to the Queen's toilet to complete her part as that of the Italian washerwoman. In a moment the coach was at the waterside. The shipping reared its masts and rigging into the lowering sky. It was a cold, and desolate, and spectral panorama. The washerwoman shivered like one smitten with ague, and, clasping tightly her bundle, she humbly entered the small boat, in which the other ladies of the party had already taken their places. Lauzun and St. Victor stepped in. The rowers pushed off, and in a few minutes the yacht had been boarded, the sails spread, and, wafted by a favourable breeze, they were speeding to the open sea. Heaven was kind to send that wind, and fervent were the grateful prayers of the Queen. But the voyagers were not done with alarms. The favourable wind freshened until it became a gale, and, not venturing to proceed farther than the Downs,

the yacht cast anchor there to ride out the storm.

Throughout the night the gentle passengers lay huddled in the miserable hold, for this rough craft had no accommodation for dainty ladies. Lauzun and St. Victor stood by the captain, ready to punish treachery, if treachery there should be, or to be ready for instant service should the tempest threaten them with destruction. Quivering beneath the buffeting of the mountainous seas, groaning as the gale tore furiously through the rigging, the tiny bark held staunchly by her straining cables to her anchorage. In the chequered story of Great Britain, never before had sea and storm prizes so great so completely at their mercy, for it was not in rough Gravesend schooners, but in the finest ships the world of their day could build, that Queens of England and Princes of Wales were ever wont to tempt the perils of the deep.

It was in Monday's small hours that the Queen left Whitehall. Not until Tuesday morning did they descry Calais. At that welcome sight away with caution. The washerwoman was a washerwoman no longer. Now the bundle of linen might cry until they heard him in Dover. Mary Beatrice was once more a queen. Lauzun and St. Victor had secured their lady, like true chevaliers of France.

And now, with the Queen and the Prince in a place of safety, let the scene be changed once more to Whitehall.

It was long past midnight, and James slept the deep sleep of exhaustion. In the ante-chamber, watch was kept by the Earl of Middleton. A loud knocking suddenly aroused the lord-in-waiting, and, the door having been opened, in stepped Halifax, Shrewsbury, and Delamere.

"King of Hearts" and Delamere were open enemies of the monarch. Halifax was a disappointing friend. What did they want at such an hour?

To see the King!

But the King slept.

Asleep or awake, they would see his Majesty. They came from the Prince of Orange with a letter, and they must deliver it instantly. "Instantly!" It was a sinister word. If Middleton were wise he foresaw at that moment what this visit meant. The King was no longer master here. Authority had departed from the sceptre, and the man who wore the Crown was in reality a subject.

Middleton turned to the bedside of his unhappy Prince. Well may he have hesitated to awake him from oblivion to the pangs of reality. Perchance, indeed, his sufferings had pursued him in his dreams, and that even the pillow offered no

From a photo by Emery Walker, after the picture by Sir Godfrey Kneller in the National Portrait Gallery.

CHARLES MONTAGUE, EARL OF HALIFAX, K.G.

p. 290.

refuge from the round of martyrdom. Falling on his knees by the King, the noble addressed him. But the weary spirit would not willingly resume its dominion. When at last the King awoke, he at once gave orders for the admission of the messengers.

Never had envoys a more ungracious errand. Gladly would they have yielded to others the honour of this audience. But the Prince of Orange was never the man to spare the feelings of English traitors. Halifax it was who proposed that James should be invited to leave Whitehall, and Halifax it was who was obliged to give effect to his own counsel. This was then his embassy, to order the master from his house.

On seeing Shrewsbury and his companions in his bedchamber at two o'clock in the morning, the King could hardly doubt but that soldiers were in the corridor, and that he had lived his last hour of liberty. It was with relief perhaps that he heard the sentence of banishment from his capital.

To Ham House he was ordered, but James pleaded that, since go he should, Rochester might be his destination. They yielded the point. What did it matter so that he took himself away from the eyes of his people? But through the City he should not go. The spectacle of a British king being marched out of London by Dutch troops would ruin everything. It would

turn to fire the phlegm of plain Englishmen. The streets would run with blood. The indignity should be inflicted with all possible secrecy. A prisoner in the midst of Dutch soldiery, they hurried him away to the river on the morning of December 18, and not an English soldier mounted guard at the Palace to salute the King as he took leave for ever of his ancestral home.

It was through a blinding rain-storm that the King for the last time, from the barge where he was a prisoner, looked upon Whitehall, upon the Palace of Westminster, upon the mansions which from either bank commanded the Thames. Cold was his heart as he gazed upon this picture, which no setting could rob of the poetry of a thousand inspiriting memories. Through the quivering cords of rain which lashed around the barge he saw the shore lined with people who, braving the elements, had come to pay him homage for the last time. There were tears in their eyes, but these jewels of affection James could not see. And then at last the tide served. The barge moved on. The Westminster shore was left behind, and Whitehall itself was soon blotted out by the windings of the river. Down poured the rain; dismal was the town; lowering was the sky. All was lost; and Nature, for that day an artist, made this mourning well, for the King would return no more.

While the captive King made his long journey down the river to Gravesend, Prince William rode into London—to St. James's. By means, fair or foul, he would win this kingdom, but not for a little time would he dare to govern it from Whitehall. There were ghosts which his sword could not exorcise, ghosts which the bottle itself could not lay. This passing cowardice was a brave soldier's tribute to the sentiments he had trampled down on the road to victory.

A little later came Anne to the Cockpit. If ghosts were stirring there she would brave them, for so William ordained it. With a high hand would Anne carry her sin. Bedecked in orange and green, the Prince's colours, they say she went to the theatre, while her poor old father was on his way to Rochester. With her of course was Lady Churchill, to help her mistress brazen out her evil-doing. Throughout that evening the Princess and her companions, rather than the play, were doubtless the attraction for the audience.

And well might she be. The play could not surpass in tragedy, nor in comedy either, the great historical drama in which the Royal lady was a leading actress. The men and women on the stage were like the strolling mimes in "Hamlet." For here was a play within the play, and the stage was where you pleased, and, where you pleased, the audience.

Outside the wind blew, freshening almost to a tempest. Anne heard it blow. Lear was at its mercy. His boat was on the waters. But the daughter, be-ribboned and be-jewelled, beaming on her friends, applauding the players, would not listen to its rage.

Till the end she remained, then drove to the Cockpit—to the ghosts. But what did the crowd know of ghosts as they pressed round her carriage? The great nobles had ruffians to propitiate or to reward. They had party victories to compass and party passions to inflame. And this enthusiastic mob "hurrahing" for a faithless daughter had been paid its price.

To her pillow some echo would follow the Princess of the cheering crowds, and in her ears would ring once more their insults to the King and Queen, raucous jests of licensed ribaldry. The wind howled round her casement, and on its wings came voices whispering to her, whispering God alone knows what. . . .

When at last sleep touched her eyelids, strange, indeed, was it if it gave repose to her throbbing brow. Who can sleep with ghosts? With a cry one can see her start from her feverish slumber and strain her eyes to penetrate the gloom. No! Her brother was not there. That cry which came to her in her dreams was but a dream. Thank God! The King, the

Queen, the babe, were not there in the shadows spying upon her from behind curtains and draperies. Sleep once more, Princess. Now your distracted spirit flies through the night to the sea. It hovers above the fields of dark-green oily waves tumbling wildly away before the raging tempest. Poor lost soul! A minute here in the black whirlwind is an eternity of damnation. Something on the crest of a huge wave takes shape. It is a boat—a boat, good God! out there on such a night! The wave fled onwards, bearing the frail craft to the deep trough of broken seas. Like a shadow it sped past the poor trembling spirit, and plunged into the watery precipice. A woman's white face set with two great shining eyes was all that sailed on that spectral ship. And then, as is the way with dreams, the woman's face was a babe's, and oh! so near to the embrace of the wolfish sea! . . .

But one may not sleep with ghosts. The Princess awakes, on her brow the beads of terror. She rubs her eyes. It is still dark. Sleeping there are nightmares; waking there is remorse. She herself has made it so; and so it now must ever be. Burying her face in her pillow, vainly she prays that life were one long day, with the world all a-laughing, with no night, no loneliness, no silence, for thought and for tears.

## CHAPTER XX

A FATHER'S curse inaugurated the Coronation of the Princess of Orange. Just as she was attired by her ladies for the ceremony at Westminster Abbey, a messenger brought the news that King James had landed in Ireland, and that the Irish had acclaimed him as their true Prince. Cold ran the blood to Mary's heart, her cheek blanched at hearing that her deeply wronged sire was so near. She had been long enough in London to understand that she owed her Crown rather to her father's ill-luck than to her own or her husband's merit. James's errors were readily forgotten when it ceased to be the business of the Press to paint him in the blackest colours. And now, on her Coronation day, he had come back, and one quarter of the realm had welcomed him home. Nor had James's flight, his misfortunes, the courage and patience of Mary Beatrice, left untouched the hearts of the English; for was not the King, with all his faults, blood of their blood, whilst the stranger on his throne was as little flawless as the Briton he had driven out!

From a photo by Emery Walker, after the picture by William Wissing in the National Portrait Gallery.

QUEEN MARY II.

p. 296.

Happily the Irish Sea still rolled between her father and the English shore, and Mary, trembling in the midst of her waiting-women, thanked God for it; and might a "Protestant wind" ever sweep its restless waters!

But this April day was to be made darker still. The King was with her when the Earl of Nottingham, her Lord Chamberlain, handed her a letter from her father. He wrote that—

"hitherto he had made all fatherly excuses for what had been done, and had wholly attributed her part in the Revolution to obedience to her husband. But the act of being crowned was in her own power; and if she were crowned while he and the Prince of Wales were living, the curses of an outraged father would light upon her, as well as of that God who has commanded duty to parents."

Nottingham, whose conscience forbade him to assist in effecting the Revolution while it acquiesced in his accepting favours from the new Court, was now the witness of a singular scene of recrimination. William, whom one can scarcely imagine susceptible to any curse save that of seeing his troops flying before an enemy, declared he had done nothing but with the approbation of his wife: not only with her approval, but by her advice.

One can believe that Mary, in her desperate

craving for some sign of affection from her husband, may have outpaced him in her zeal against her father. His taunt, flung at her before the household, stung her indeed, as only truth can sting, and her retort was tinged with something of that reckless and callous spirit in which Anne had approved at Leicester, the idea of a Society for the extirpation of all Catholics should ill befall the Prince of Orange. She told William that he might blame himself if her father should regain his authority for "letting him go as he did." What that mysterious reproach hinted at Mary alone perhaps knew ; but in its dark suggestiveness can be traced something of the cruelty which only kindred can inflict on kindred when love turns to such bitterness as makes common hatred mild by comparison.

With her father's malediction ringing in her brain, Mary went out from Whitehall with her partner to be crowned at Westminster Abbey. The occasion was too solemn for the airy bravado with which she had, on returning to England, entered into possession of a father's home. Then she was joyously defiant by command of the husband, who would not have a daughter tearful for so slight a cause as a father's ruin. And did she need encouragement to rise to her part it was the duty of her Court to fire her with the necessary spirit. She and they were comrades, if not

in sin, at least in prosperity. But her coronation called her to a stage where she was, above all, an object of curiosity; where every woman wondered of what flesh was this daughter made, and every man knew she had sold her father in a frantic effort to dethrone Elizabeth Villiers from her sinister queenship, and had sold him in vain. William eyed nobles and dames as one who was their feudal lord: his sword his best title to their allegiance. He saw himself the Conqueror, just like the great Norman of centuries earlier. It was an illusion which experience would dispel. But Mary, hot with shame, had no illusions. There had assuredly been a conquest, a downfall; but in her inmost heart she must have felt that there was in England no such slave as she who henceforth was Queen in name.

Hardly had William taken up the reins of government than the spoiled child of James II. was rudely awakened to her folly. Anne had risen against an indulgent father to impose upon herself the iron discipline of a fortress. Of that fortress William was commandant, and none might challenge his rule. The people were independent; of Parliament he was a little afraid, because it held the golden key to his ambitions. But in the Royal circle he would unglove the iron hand. The Queen was inured to it; but Anne, with spirit unbroken by the trials through

which her sister had passed at The Hague, was speedily in revolt.

William could not brook spirit in a woman unless she happened to be Elizabeth Villiers, and to Anne he would show no leniency. The sisters were not even comforted by mutual affection in their serfdom. The bonds uniting them in girlhood had been snapped beyond repair during the years in which one had been learning the lesson of patient suffering, and the other habits of unrestrained luxury and extravagance at the expense of an adoring parent. The first delight of their reunion was quickly dissipated by petty contentions. Anne asked for the splendid apartments at Whitehall which had been the home of Louise de Querouaille in the days of her ascendency. The King immediately granted her request. Then Anne desired some rooms that lay adjacent to these for the use of her servants. The Duke of Devonshire, however, put forward what he conceived to be his superior claim, and the Queen threw her influence on the side of the Lord Steward. It may be that Devonshire thought that Anne would decline the Duchess's apartments when she could not have the others. If so he was disappointed, and a reversion which, to quote Sarah Churchill, would have given his Grace a very "magnificent air" as master of the finest ball-room in London, was denied him.

Anne's next request was for the Palace of Richmond, endeared to her by early associations. But this desire brought her into conflict with one greater than Devonshire. Richmond was in the possession of the Villiers family, and Elizabeth's kindred were not to be lightly evicted, for was she not the real Queen?

Many circumstances united to make Anne repellent to her brother-in-law. He soon learned that she enjoyed the affections of the people to an extent he could never hope to rival. Her faults were made light of, being attributed to selfish advisers, to her sex, and to inexperience rather than to innate perversity. Many would gladly have seen her Queen, since a change of Sovereigns was inevitable. The future, too, was full of uncertainty, and to the astute Dutchman nothing in it was more uncertain than Anne. In a thousand ways she might be made the tool of those who would thwart him. It was conceivable even that some day she might serve as the instrument of a humiliation in the exact ratio to the splendour of his uprise, for the same power which had placed him on the throne could in the future supplant him in favour of the Princess. Besides this jealousy, based on Anne's natural advantages as an English Princess in her own land, where he was a stranger dependent for his rank on the difficulties of the nation rather than

on sentimental ties, there existed another potent cause of strife. Abhorrent to William were Anne's closest friends, Sarah and her husband, now Countess and Earl of Marlborough, in virtue of their share in the Revolution.

To reduce Anne to complete subservience was therefore, for political and personal reasons, a cardinal feature of William's policy. Under her father's rule Anne had drawn a Royal income. But the Revolution, as she regretfully discovered, meant more than a change of monarchs. There were new arrangements at the Treasury, and the prodigal mistress of the Cockpit saw the golden stream grow suddenly dry. To William it appeared the wildest extravagance that Anne should be given some £32,000 a year to spend on her caprices, while he had uses so much more worthy for all the wealth that England could spare. The Princess, therefore, was deprived of her revenue, and became a pensioner on the bounty of her brother-in-law. He would dole out to her what she needed, and he would see that she did not need too much.

To Anne, who had never known restraint in expenditure, this arrangement was the very refinement of persecution. In the past she had given herself no anxiety as to what became of all her thousands. If they melted long before the allotted time she contracted debt, and her father

came to her relief. What a change was this, to find every golden piece a rare curio which, having once escaped her, might return only through the tight fist of King William! It was too early yet for her to feel remorse. That was a punishment reserved for later years. Rage and disappointment and vain regrets for her former affluence and independence were the chastisement of the present.

An incident which occurred at Hampton Court during the summer following the Coronation throws into cameo-like relief the character and attitude of William at this time. Anne, who was shortly to become a mother, was his guest, and in the course of a meal a dish of green peas, beautifully fresh and inviting, from the Royal gardens were laid upon the table. They were the first of the season, and Anne, already something of a gourmand, revelled in anticipation of the treat to come. William helped himself liberally from the dish. Anne waited patiently. William was strangely forgetful. He had devoured her income, he might at least give her a spoonful of peas. He renewed his attentions to the dish without ever casting in her direction an inquiring eye. The plague take him for a king if this was the art of Royal hospitality as acquired at The Hague! The great man, unconscious of the young matron's envy, finished the peas, and the outrage was accomplished.

On July 24, 1689, while still the Princess resided at Hampton Court, a child was born to her, the only one of all her progeny who survived infancy and grew up to boyhood. Anne's pride and joy in the birth of her son were shared by the people generally, who rejoiced in this pledge that England would once again have an English King. The patrons of the Revolution regarded the boy as heir to the Crown, while many whose sympathies were with James looked kindly on an infant sprung from the old dynasty, who might eventually, for the sake of peace, be preferred to the rightful Prince of Wales.

Encouraged by her new dignity, and strong in the favour she had conferred upon her country by giving them this Prince, Anne took measures to free herself from the thraldom imposed on her by William. She was resolved to enjoy once more a well-filled purse which would be all her own. Steps were taken in Parliament to set aside a separate income for the Princess. The Queen having reproached Anne with the proceedings in the Commons, the latter attributed them to the solicitude of her friends. "And pray," said the Queen, "what friends have you but the King and me?" It was Her Majesty's first thrust at the Marlboroughs, who were active in promoting a scheme which was probably as

necessary to Sarah's comfort as it was to Anne's dignity and peace of mind.

A sum of fifty thousand a year was set aside by Parliament for Anne, and she resumed her former mode of life as mistress of a splendid establishment. Nor did the Marlboroughs go empty-handed. The victory brought a pension of a thousand a year to Sarah from her Royal mistress, with apologies for troubling her with so insignificant a trifle.

From the Earl of Nottingham the King purchased Kensington House, and while workmen were engaged in transforming it into a Royal residence Anne leased Campden House, in the vicinity, as the home of her baby boy, young William Duke of Gloucester, now approaching the first anniversary of his birthday. When the day arrived the little duke had grown enormously in importance, for only a couple of weeks before, the disaster of the Boyne and James's second Flight to France had administered a crushing blow to the hopes of the Legitimists.

But though the fortune of war favoured the sisters, victory did not bring contentment. Mary had immolated on the altar of her lord's glory her every sense of justice. True happiness for her there could not be while her father's malediction rested on her head. But love can compensate a love-sick woman for much, and may even nerve

her to bear so terrible a burden. For Mary, however, there was no such compensation. She had bartered right to no purpose, and having betrayed her father she found herself as far removed as ever from a place in the heart of the strange being whom she had the misfortune to call husband. Yet is there something singularly touching in the way she endured her isolation, humbly subjecting herself to the tyrant's whims, in the hope of winning some day a tender return. Just as for his sake she hardened her heart against her father, so she never dreamt of shielding her sister as she might have done from his insults.

When in the summer of 1691 William was quitting England for Flanders, Prince George volunteered to serve at sea. The Prince had long ago proved his bravery, and though without ability for command, Anne doubtless wished that some employment might be given him which would bring him credit, if not renown, in the eyes of his fellow-countrymen as father of their future King. William overwhelmed the unfortunate volunteer with contempt. To his application he vouchsafed no reply, and at the eleventh hour, when all George's preparations were complete, and he was about to join the fleet, Lord Nottingham waited upon him with the Queen's commands to the contrary. This humiliation, which made Anne and the Prince the laughing-

From a photo by Emery Walker, after the painting by Michael Dahl in the National Portrait Gallery

THE PRINCESS ANNE WITH HER INFANT SON, WILLIAM, DUKE OF GLOUCESTER.

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stock of the town, was softened by no diplomatic subterfuge, by no sisterly grace, and henceforth Mary and Anne were divided by that bitter enmity which can rankle only in bosoms once united by the gentlest bonds.

Soon rumours were current which cast Anne's household under something of a political cloud. It was said that Marlborough had entered into correspondence with St. Germains, that the ingrate to his old friend and master was a traitor to his new allegiance. The Revolution had brought Marlborough an Earldom; he was, moreover, a lord of the bed-chamber and a member of William's Council. But the wrangles of ministers, and the society of a Court from which the master was nearly always absent, had no attractions for one of the greatest warriors of history.

He had seen some service in Ireland during the late campaign, but his successes there had only kindled his enthusiasm for the broader field beyond the North Sea, where the armies of France and the Empire wrestled for victory. The Garter, which would have consoled him for this inaction, had been solicited for him by Anne, and refused by the Queen. Piqued by this treatment, but impelled above all by the restless spirit which, untrammelled by any code of chivalry, would pursue the path of immediate advantage,

Marlborough turned his attention to St. Germains. What matter who was King, what matter who suffered, if with one more national paroxysm the Earl became a marquis, or the coveted Garter adorned his breast!

It often needs greater courage to be a rogue than an honest man. Marlborough, in entering into relations with St. Germains at this juncture, was courting destruction. William was kept well posted in the affairs of the exiled Royal Family. Of this Marlborough could hardly have been ignorant, nor could he have expected that William and Mary would conspire to cover up his backslidings, did any hint of them reach their ears.

But one ready to dare all was at hand to banish the whisperings of prudence, if such there were. Sarah knew that the Tower was full of political prisoners; she knew that blood had been shed profusely to protect the Throne. The Queen's uncle, the Earl of Clarendon, was in captivity for loving her father well. Lord Preston, James's Lord Chamberlain, had escaped execution only because he was more useful to the Crown alive than dead, by reason of the information he could give concerning the Jacobite schemes. Marlborough, however, in his placid fashion, counted the risks, then rushed into treason.

He wrote to King James that he was harassed

with remorse at the remembrance of his crimes against His Majesty, and, what was of greater moment, promised "to bring the Princess Anne back to her duty if he received the least word of encouragement."

If at this time James had suddenly appeared in London, resentment against his successor, if not affection for himself, would have gone far to secure his restoration. Avarice, corruption, and extravagance were playing havoc with the resources of the country; English soldiers were being slaughtered in Flanders in campaigns barren of glory, and the English navy, recently so formidable, had been swept from the Channel by the French.

William would not condescend to flatter his new subjects by learning the art of being an Englishman, and the great English nobles could not acquire at will the Dutch manner which would stamp them as worthy of the King, who despised them. But James would not risk being sold twice, least of all by Jack Churchill. The overtures from William's lord of the bedchamber were therefore awarded but cold recognition at St. Germains, where hard fortune had taught them to value lightly professions of friendship that stopped at fair words.

At the Cockpit a hundred dark schemes were discussed and rejected. Under the influence of

the Marlboroughs it had become a hot-bed of treason. The master was of a temper to take his wrongs with philosophy. While his lady had fifty thousand pounds of English gold to maintain herself and him, and repair the ravages wrought by time upon the wine-cellar, Prince George could bridle his wrath. Anne, too, had her aid to philosophy, for there was Gloucester. Whatever vexation the Revolution had brought her, it held out to Gloucester the certainty of a Crown. And this, regarded from the standpoint of purely material advantage, might be held to outweigh the discomforts of such annoyance as it was within the power of William to inflict. But at this juncture Anne is found opposing, as it were, Gloucester's progress to the Throne. Where Marlborough had led the way she followed, and at the close of 1691, just three years from the date of her sin, we find her begging her father's forgiveness in this letter :

" I have been very desirous of some safe opportunity to make you a sincere and humble offer of my duty and submission, and to beg you will be assured that I am both truly concerned for the misfortune of your condition, and sensible, as I ought to be, of my own unhappiness. As to what you may think I have contributed to it, if wishes could recall what is past, I have long since redeemed my fault. I am sensible it would have been a great relief to me if I could have

found means to have acquainted you earlier with my repentant thoughts, but I hope they may find the advantage of coming late—of being less suspected of insincerity than perhaps they would have been at any time before. It will be a great addition to the ease I propose to my own mind by this plain confession if I am so happy as to find that it brings any real satisfaction to yours, and that you are as indulgent and easy to receive my humble submissions as I am to make them, in a free, disinterested acknowledgment of my fault, for no other end but to deserve and receive your pardon. I have had a great mind to beg you to make one compliment for me, but fearing the expressions which would be properest for me to make use of might be, perhaps, the least convenient for a letter, I must content myself at present with hoping the bearer will make a compliment for me to the Queen."

The Court was not long in ignorance of the doings at the Cockpit. Lady Fitzharding was neither blind nor deaf, now that her sister was so near, any more than when she had ruled at The Hague. The King and Queen were dismayed at this real peril. Nowhere could William look for disinterested loyalty. Everything depended on the Queen, and her ability proved somehow equal to the emergency, though her tact fell far short of what wisdom would demand.

It was Anne's way to evade an unpleasant issue. The more masculine Mary met it bravely. There was a stormy interview between the sisters,

one bent upon destroying the Marlboroughs, the other their sworn friend. Little that was said has been handed down, but sufficient to indicate that Mary played the part of Queen, and would command, while Anne was dogged, and would disobey. Each knew well the measure of the other's strength. Mary might threaten, but nobody knew better than the Queen that they dare not hurt a hair of the Princess's head. To do so would be to invite ruin. Without Anne's assistance William could never have been King, without her countenance his Throne would suffer in stability and dignity. To attempt to punish her would be to reveal her strength and his own weakness. So galling a position exasperated the Royal pair, and they struck at Anne in the only way they dared—through her favourites, the detested Marlboroughs.

As a lord of the bed-chamber it was Marlborough's privilege to assist His Majesty to don his shirt. This honourable service having been duly performed one winter's morning, the King sent him a message dispensing with his services. Marlborough had gone a-hunting for adventures, and had found them! Anne's friendship could not shield him; and if the Earl had counted upon it he had done so most unwisely, for the higher he stood with Anne, the deeper would be his disgrace, so far as William and Mary could compass it.

## CHAPTER XXI

"MY brave English! My brave English!" Delight blended with despair, despair with delight in this cry, for it was uttered by James II. as he watched the battle in which he saw his countrymen triumph, while his own most fondly cherished hopes were dispelled by their bravery.

The day was that of May 19, 1692. Before James lay the swelling bosom of the Channel, on which rode many a gallant ship of the line, with here the flag of France floating to the breeze, and there the standard of his beloved England. And beneath these flags were done the deeds of reckless valour that stirred the blood of the monarch watching from the shore. Did France win, then the sea was clear for a Franco-Irish army to embark for the English coast; and it would go hard with them if, having once more set foot on his native land, he did not regain the Crown of his fathers. Did victory rest with the banners of England, then were all his plans frustrated, all his castles but castles in the air.

But in that thrilling hour, when his old comrades of the English fleet, with irresistible bravery, closed with the French, ready to die, every man, or lord it over the Channel, James was above all a Briton. The waters ran red with the blood of his foreign friends; their noble ships were shattered hulks, riddled with English balls; from the smoke of battle masts and spars emerged, columns of fire. The French were beaten. James was beaten. But the honour of British seamen was retrieved, and James, a British seaman too, cried out in an ecstasy of pure patriotism, "My brave English! My brave English!"

Could the English have but heard that cry, no foreign ships would have been needed to carry him to London, where all through the spring the Princess Anne, now at deadly feud with the Court, awaited with trembling anxiety the issue of the French preparations for a descent upon England.

Anne was lying seriously ill at Sion House, the ducal mansion on the banks of the Thames familiar to Stuarts in tribulation, when news reached her that misfortune had once again been her father's portion. If in her anger against her sister she had really desired the restoration of her father, the tidings from La Hogue must have sufficed to convince her of her folly. Not every day could Louis risk such a battle, and for weal

or woe the Throne of William and Mary was by this victory rendered secure from foreign assaults. And as for domestic conspiracies, they were likely to be more dangerous to the conspirators than to the Sovereigns. For it was ever the spirit of the English to look askance upon patriots working in the dark.

Anne's migration from the Cockpit to Sion House let the whole town into the secret of the warfare raging at Court. The dismissal of Marlborough by the King was intended as a hint that he and his wife would best consult His Majesty's pleasure by disappearing altogether from the Royal circle. Sarah, however, was not the person to obliterate herself voluntarily. Immediately following her husband's disgrace she had the temerity to attend the public reception at Kensington Palace in the train of the Princess Anne, who perpetrated the impertinence with an air of the most exasperating innocence, which was a feast of comedy for the wags of the Court. It was as though the loyalty of the Cockpit were above suspicion. Above suspicion indeed! Look at the Countess of Marlborough come to do homage, though the Earl had only just been driven from the Palace! Surely there never before was such humble devotion!

But Queen Mary, knowing Sarah and her sister, construed that humble devotion into in-

supportable insolence. With what equanimity she could, she endured the presence of the Countess in the presence-chamber, but the while she inwardly resolved that never again should Sarah so deride her authority. If Anne and Sarah laughed that night on their return from Kensington at the ease with which they had flouted their Majesties, by the next day the jest had lost its piquancy. From Kensington Palace came a letter commanding the favourite's dismissal, and the Princess discovered that her splendid joke, at which the town would laugh, relishing its coolness, its audacity, its airy, mischievous spirit, was one of the costliest escapades of her life. In this letter declaring open war the Queen wrote :

"KENSINGTON, *February* 5, 1692.

"Having something to say to you which I know will not be very pleasing, I choose rather to write it first, being unwilling to surprise you ; though I think what I am going to tell you should not, if you give yourself the time to think that never anybody was suffered to live at Court in my Lord Marlborough's circumstances.

"I need not repeat the cause he has given the King to do what he has done, nor his unwillingness at all times to come to such extremities though people do deserve it. I hope you do me the justice to believe it is as much against my will that I now tell you that after this it is very unfit Lady Marlborough should stay with you,

since that gives her husband so just a pretence of being where he should not.

"I think I might have expected you would have spoken to me of it. And the King and I both believing it made us stay thus long. But seeing you were so far from it that you brought my Lady Marlborough hither last night, makes us resolve to put it off no longer, but tell you she must not stay; and that I have all the reason imaginable to look upon your bringing her as the strangest thing that ever was done. Nor could all my kindness for you—which is ever ready to turn all you do the best way—at any other time have hindered me showing you so that moment. But I considered your condition; and that made me master myself so far as not to take notice of it then.

"But now I must tell you it was very unkind in a sister, would have been very uncivil in an equal, and I need not say I have more to claim, which, though my kindness would never make me exact, yet when I see the use you would make of it, I must tell you I know what is due to me, and expect to have it from you. 'Tis upon that account I tell you plainly Lady Marlborough must not continue with you in the circumstances her lord is.

"I know this will be uneasy to you, and I am sorry for it . . . for I do love you as my sister, and nothing but yourself can make me do otherwise. . . ."

Happy had it been for Anne had she bowed to this arbitrary judgment; and in after-years many a regret must she have indulged, that

when the terrible Sarah might have been subdued by the indomitable William and the spirit of Mary, she herself had preserved her to be her torment.

Anne, contrary to the advice of her uncle Rochester, determined, however, to stand by her favourite. For Sarah she would, if fate so willed it, go to the block. Not that Anne relished strife. But like Charles I. and her father, the most delicate handling was necessary to guide Anne along the path of wisdom, for, having taken her course, however foolish, she would not readily retrace her steps. Her reply to the Queen's command was a point-blank refusal to obey. But Mary was not easily baffled. Dog-like in her submission to her husband, she seemed, nevertheless, to have imbibed much of his tenacity; and while to him she was ever compliant, there was in her government no reflection of the wife's weakness. Anne's disobedience was met with a command to Marlborough and his Countess to abide no longer in the Palace of Whitehall.

It might have been argued that the Cockpit was strictly not part of the Palace. But Anne, on consideration, waived the point. Better be a martyr than a victor in dispute. If she could not retain what servants she would in her own home, the home given her by her uncle, of

which she was absolute mistress in her father's reign, then would she go out from it altogether, and seek an asylum where tyranny could not pursue her.

In her distress Anne turned to the Duchess of Somerset, and begged permission to be her guest at Sion House. Their Majesties had not anticipated this eagerness for public martyrdom on the part of the Heir-apparent. Her appeal to the Duchess was an appeal for the compassion of her countrymen, an appeal for censure on the King. As a proud, rough soldier, His Majesty could not help feeling aggrieved at a move which made him appear all too faithfully the Dutch boor. And since a boor she would have him, a boor he would be! In a month or two the Princess would again be a mother. But her state of health was not deemed in any way a palliation of her obstinacy, nor yet a reason for allowing her to go unpunished. Her history as a mother was a history of misfortune, a history that now made a special plea for tenderness.

But William's heart was cased in steel. Her plight no more touched him than if, like the hero of Roman mythology, a wolf had mothered him. Let her go from the Cockpit, and so much the better if she could find no place to lay her head. Somerset he called upon to close

his doors against her. But the Duke snubbed the King for his pains. His house was his own. His guests would be of his own choosing. The Princess was welcome to come when she would, and remain while she pleased. Then William exacted the only revenge in his power. The Princess's guard was withdrawn, and the heiress to the Throne, unprotected, notwithstanding her precarious health, was robbed on the highway one day in March while making a journey from London to Sion House.

Thus were the sisters open enemies. William left immediately for the war in Flanders, though preparations were proceeding apace for an invasion of England. St. Germains was bright with the dawn of new hope, for if the English fleet, weakened by political feuds and disheartened by reverses, failed on the day of trial, the road to London would be open to James. Anne, lying sick and repentant at the lonely riverside mansion, had plenty of leisure for bitter reflection. If James should return how would he greet her? Generous he had ever been to her errors. He would forgive her, of that she was assured; but never would he forget; never again would he trust the lips that had lied so glibly, or confide in the heart that had led her to the camp of the enemy when her loyalty might have saved him. She had written offering to fly to him the

moment he landed in England. Looking out over the desolate pastures at eventide, with the distant Thames meandering to the sea, heavily must the sadness of her state have oppressed her. From the ordeal fast approaching, after months of vexation and anger, crowned with a decisive quarrel with her sister, she might not emerge with her life. How calmly the river flowed! How peaceful was the green all round! Perhaps it would be for the best if all were over, and Nature took her back to its bosom so impassive in the midst of all the turbulence of men.

And then there was young Gloucester. How would it fare with him were his grandfather to return? What man owed him loyalty? Not James assuredly, for who so base as the man that broke bread at the King's table, and left it to ride to the tents of the enemy! George of Denmark's son should do many a doughty deed before effacing his sire's ignominy. And as for William, God help Gloucester should the day ever come when he would cease to be the most precious of all His Majesty's subjects, as the one on whom the nation had built the happiest expectations.

If during those long lonely days, when few visitors braved the displeasure of the Queen to make their way from London to Sion House, Anne prayed, she yet can hardly have known

what to pray. But heavy as was William's hand, it was perhaps easier to bear than the dread lest she should have to look once more into her father's eyes and encounter their forgiveness.

One mid-April day Sion House was thrown into sudden commotion. The Princess was ill. Off to the Queen flew a messenger bearing Anne's words of sorrow and of fear. The humblest boor whom the courier passed on his way to London might have been softened by the appeal which he carried to Court. There was no housewife in the rudest hovel nestling on the river bank whose bosom would not have melted for the disconsolate lady of Sion House, had she but known what Mary was soon to know. But it was the hour when the blood calls for its own; when sister yearns for sister; and the kindest hand, the softest word still leaves the stranger's compassion but a stranger's. On, messenger, to the Queen's ante-chamber, that the lady may have the consolation she craves, and that quickly.

How cold was that ante-chamber, though outside the sun of advancing spring shone brightly in the sky of blue! The tenderness of April was in the budding trees, in the glistening verdure of the young grasses. Who could be hard when Nature was awakening, and all the secret currents of life were stirring anew? With mysteries and mysteries, comprising the subtlest things of

heaven and of earth, written broadly across the face of that April day, who could brood upon the childish prick of some thoughtless tongue, upon the waywardness of some hour of passion?

The courier sent in his message from the Princess. It was very humble, infinitely touching in the great fear which framed every word. It was to announce to Her Majesty that her hour was come, "that she felt very ill indeed, much worse than was usual to her." The Queen heard. They waited for her answer. Then Pride spoke. There was no reply for the Princess. She had disobeyed the Queen. Let her suffer all the pangs; not a gentle syllable from her sister's lips would assuage her woe.

Anne spoke the simple truth when she said that never before had she felt so ill. As the hours dragged on at Sion House those near the Princess were filled with dire apprehension. Mary did not come. Love had no power over her. But the dread grew upon them that the Queen would have to come, driven thither by the grim compulsion of death.

At length a child's strange cry of wonder fluttered the hearts of Anne's ladies. In that new voice, so thin, so weak, one might discern a feeble little note of anger, of reproach, of rebellion. They had not given him half a chance of life, these strangers. They were enemies, all

of them. They had robbed him of he knew not what, something which they possessed, but which he would never enjoy. Tired of life almost before his baby eyes had peeped their amazement upon its light, Gloucester's baby brother tarried only while they christened him "George," after his father, then expired.

Now should Mary come! She had turned her back on Love, but Death was her master. The tyranny of the situation filled her with rage. She had shown such firmness, such queenly pride. And, after all, she should make that dreary journey to Somerset's mansion.

Harshness, by some inexplicable inter-play of emotions, often finds refuge in still deeper extremes of harshness at the moment when one should expect repentance. Knowing as she did what Anne had suffered, Mary must have beheld with some degree of horror her own display of unsisterly feeling. As her carriage jolted over the rough roads to Brentford, there was ample time for reflection. The Marlboroughs had come between her and Anne. The Princess had been unwise, obstinate, disloyal. But Anne was, she knew, the spoiled child upon whom King William had tried to impose an unendurable yoke. Nor could she close her eyes to the services of Anne as she and William crept to the Throne. . . .

And now her baby boy was dead! . . . Had things been a little different, had there been peace instead of strife, had Sion House been cheered during these recent weeks with bright hopes, instead of being overcast with gloomiest apprehensions, might not the infant have lived? She had gratified her resentment. To the defiance of the Marlboroughs she had hurled back defiance, but at what a cost if this boy might have been preserved to England and the King!

Whatever remorse tormented the Queen as she made her way along the river-bank on this enforced pilgrimage to Sion House, she was still unsubdued on entering Anne's chamber.

"I have made the first step by coming to you, and I now expect that you should make the next by removing Lady Marlborough!" Such was the Queen's greeting to the unfortunate Princess who had not yet emerged from the portals of death.

Anne lay on her bed, white as a sheet. Not far away there was a tiny body swathed in its grave-clothes. To feel that little heart beat, and the baby limbs grow warm and pliant as it nestled to her bosom, she would have yielded just then her heritage. If Mary would but look at the little thing, touch its waxen fingerlets, speak to her of the dainty features, the wondrous eyes so swiftly darkened, the lips whose first

kiss, delicate as the heart of a rosebud, had ravished with never-to-be-forgotten sweetness the mother's soul! Such talk would be balm to Anne. But Mary had come because she should, or give the scandalmongers more matter for gossip, and she had nothing more comforting to say in the home of suffering and death than, "Dismiss Lady Marlborough!"

The Princess's lips trembled. She could have turned on her pillow and wept with pity for herself, like the simplest plebeian in the land. But she was more truly a Stuart than the proud, hard Queen. It is so easy to be proud and hard when flesh and spirit are an imperious unity; so difficult when the sinking heart, the failing pulse envelop the soul as in a leaden casket. But Anne, with the eyes of the Queen's ladies upon her, bravely choked back the rising sobs, bravely repressed the tears that would fall in bitter floods, bravely steadied her voice as she replied:

"I have never in all my life disobeyed your Majesty—except in this one particular; which I hope, at some time or other, will appear as unreasonable to your Majesty as it does now to me."

If place there was for eavesdropping, the Countess of Marlborough heard, no doubt, the Queen's command and Anne's disobedience.

In the long story of the follies of kings and princes, higher spirit had never been shown in

defence of a worthless favourite. Were it possible to redeem Sarah from selfishness and arrogance, were it possible to transmute the base metal of sordid service into the pure gold of chivalrous devotion, Anne had done it when, though sick unto death, she flouted the Queen. But if such miracles might be wrought, it was not upon the like of Sarah.

These few angry words were all that passed between the sisters. The Queen sailed from the room as majestically as she had come.

This memorable visit of Her Majesty to Sion House closed with a tableau as cruel almost as its opening. Prince George escorted Her Majesty from the mansion to her coach. The unfortunate father of the dead babe had at least done her no wrong. Sarah was not his favourite. On the contrary, her will must often have clashed with the Prince's, and then it was George who should yield. But Her Majesty chose to forget that it was so, chose to forget that this big, dog-like fellow, so honestly devoted to Anne, had lost that day a son.

She might have called the dead baby "George" just once, as though she would have him back amongst them, if the boon of life were hers to give. But there was no word of pity for the father, only queenly indignation that her word was not law in his household.

Back at the Palace once more, the Queen's conscience smote her for her harshness. To her ladies she spoke of what had passed, and expressed sorrow that she had allowed her anger to carry her far beyond the bounds of good taste, under circumstances which might have thawed to pity William himself. While the Queen indulged in useless regrets Anne was already the victim of a raging fever. While it ran its course her life hung upon a thread, but Sion House saw the Queen no more.

Meanwhile great events were impending. Louis was completing his plans for the invasion of England. The French fleet rode off La Hogue. Ashore, the camp was alive with the bustle of preparation for embarking troops and stores. King James received there the letter written by Anne imploring his forgiveness. To the exiled monarch that letter was a good omen. The bluff old Jacobite who delivered it could not, however, forgive filial treason as easily as the fond parent, eager only to find excuses for the sins of his children. When James spoke kindly of Anne he apostrophised her in the choicest terms of a vocabulary learned in a long apprenticeship to the sea.

While the country was drifting to this perilous crisis Queen Mary consigned the Earl of Marlborough to the safe keeping of the Tower of

London. It was a measure of prudence on her part, for the decisive battle in the Channel could not be much longer delayed, and Her Majesty had only too much reason to fear that the olden glory of the British fleet would again be tarnished. The ships' officers were for the most part fervent Jacobites. Admiral Russell, the Commander, had repented of his share in the Revolution, and was now in communication with the exiled King, and had actually arranged the terms upon which he would leave to the invaders a clear course to the English shore. All that Russell required was that the enemy should slink out to sea under the cover of night. By day he could not let them pass unchallenged, for that would involve shame greater than he dared incur, and would, moreover, be a challenge to his seamen to which they might reply right gallantly without word of command. William was in Flanders, and the Queen was left all alone, at the mercy of a disloyal fleet, a doubtful army, and a people indifferent and disappointed.

Keen, therefore, as was Anne's distress at the captivity of Sarah's lord, none knew better than she how thoroughly it was justified. Any day James might be on the coast, and Marlborough would gallop to his camp. That was a risk which Mary dare not regard lightly. With the genius of Marlborough to guide him, and the army and

navy largely officered by Jacobites, there could be no doubt as to the issue of the contest.

While Mary, at Kensington Palace, awaited with intrepid spirit, but deep anxiety, the fateful decree soon to be registered in the shock of battle, the patient at Sion House was possessed, as she wrote herself, "by a thousand melancholy thoughts." The one thing wanted to complete her misery was that Lady Marlborough should be sent to the Tower to keep her husband company. To Sarah, who in correspondence with Anne was nearly always "Mrs. Freeman," the Princess, under the less expressive nom de plume of Morley, wrote as follows:

"I cannot help fearing they should hinder you from coming to me, though how they can do that without making you a prisoner, I cannot guess. . . .

"Let them do what they please, nothing shall ever vex me, so I can have the opportunity of seeing dear Mrs. Freeman, and I swear I would live on bread and water between two walls without repining; for as long as you are kind, nothing can ever be mortification to your faithful Mrs. Morley, who wishes she may never enjoy a moment's happiness in this world or the next, if ever she should prove false to you."

Moved by a happy inspiration, the Queen appealed to the chivalry of the fleet, on which depended everything. To degrade the Admiral where so many of his officers were equally false to their allegiance would have been madness. She sent to them a message declaring that in

defiance of her advisers she still trusted them. She had heard of their disaffection, yet would she leave them their commissions. Their Queen was in their hands. They would not betray a helpless woman and the glory of their country.

That appeal was a master-stroke. A woman's tact, one might perhaps say a woman's naïve impudence, saved everything.

Tourville commanded the French fleet. He refused to slink out to sea under cover of night in deference to Russell's wishes. He was thinking, not of the interests of James, but of the glory of France. His solicitude was not to save the English admiral's face, but to win the laurels against which he staked his life. And why not? Misfortune ever dogged James. In his cause no battle could be won. There were the hearts of the English beating for him, while the sailors of France, of late the mistress of the seas, were fighting for him; yet Fate would not be defeated. His destiny was written and could not be effaced by the blood of the valiant.

The glorious fortune that had for so long attended upon the Armadas of France was completely reversed at La Hogue; and James, in the camp of the enemy, cried out his admiration, as we have already heard, for the gallant fellows who—strange confusion—wanted him for their King, yet here achieved his ruin.

## CHAPTER XXII

WELL might Mary have echoed her father's applause of the victory of La Hogue when news reached Kensington that the French had been swept from the Channel ; that she was safe.

Now might Marlborough do his worst, and Sarah likewise. Now might their mistress revile King and Queen to her household. Let her promise to fly to her father. The keeping of that promise would carry her a long way, and by paths too dangerous for the luxurious Lady Anne.

La Hogue had conquered her as well as James. She had played with treason, and treason had failed. But true to that preference for covert hostility rather than open war which so distinguished her character, Anne, as soon as she was convalescent, assumed the part of dutiful Princess. She would pay her respects to the Queen, and Dr. Stillingfleet, Bishop of Worcester, was enlisted as peace-maker.

Mary's reply was couched in a vein of languid

contempt. La Hogue had freed her from any necessity that had hitherto existed for deceiving the public. Through the good Bishop Mary replied:

"I have received yours by the Bishop of Worcester, and have little to say to it; since you cannot but know, that as I never use compliments, so now they cannot serve. 'Tis none of my fault that we live at this distance, and I have endeavoured to show my willingness to do otherwise, and I will do no more.

"Don't give yourself any unnecessary trouble; for be assured 'tis not words can make us live together as we ought. You know what I required of you. And now I tell you, if you doubted it before, that I cannot change my mind, but expect to be complied with, or you must not wonder that I doubt of your kindness.

"You can give me no other marks that will satisfy me, nor can I put any other construction upon your actions than what all the world must that sees them. These things do not hinder me being very glad to hear that you are well and wishing that you may continue so; and that you may yet, while it is in your power, oblige me to be your affectionate sister, MARIE R."

Thus bluntly was Anne told that her presence at Court was not desired unless the Countess of Marlborough was dismissed. But the tone was not one of anger, rather was it charged with contemptuous indifference, as though what she commanded was for form's sake, and that she

cared little whether she was obeyed or defied. How much more animated would the style have been had Mary enjoyed the stimulus of perusing this letter from the invalid at Sion House to Lady Marlborough :

" Sure never anybody was so used by a sister ! But I thank God I have nothing to reproach myself withal in this business, but the more I think of all that has passed the better I am satisfied. And if I had done otherwise I should have deserved to have been the scorn of the world, and to be trampled upon as much as my enemies would have me. . . . Farewell ! I hope in Christ you will never think more of leaving me, for I would be sacrificed to do you the least service, and nothing but death can ever make me part with you."

Some members of Anne's household, notwithstanding the temper of the Queen, would have had the Prince and Princess go to Court to compliment Her Majesty on the triumph of La Hogue. But George had no share in that victory. King and Queen had left him ashore when so much glory was to be won at sea. It was a time to pity himself rather than to rejoice with his persecutors. And so Prince and Princess were silent amidst the chorus of flattery which saluted the delighted Queen.

Without presenting themselves at Court, therefore, to offer their congratulations, Anne

and Prince George left Sion House for Bath, where the visitors were received with every manifestation of loyalty which a fashionable watering-place might be expected to accord patrons so valuable. The Queen's displeasure, however, pursued her sister to the West. Nottingham, as Lord Chamberlain, wrote to the Mayor of Bath:

"The Queen has been informed that yourself and your brethren have attended the Princess with the same respect and ceremony as have been usually paid to the Royal Family. Perhaps you may not have heard what occasion Her Majesty has had to be displeased with the Princess, and therefore I am commanded to acquaint you that you are not for the future to pay Her Highness any respect or ceremony without leave from Her Majesty, who does not doubt of receiving from you and your brethren this public mark of your duty."

This admonition to the loyalists of Bath to moderate their transports rather amused the Princess. To be forgotten by the Court would have annoyed her. But that the Queen should grudge her the obeisances of the fathers of Bath and the cheers of the people, was delicious proof of her importance. Lady Marlborough, who had no perception of the droll, was irritated at the sudden change in the demeanour of the Corporation. Sunday came, and the Mayor failed to

accompany Anne to her devotions. Sarah's annoyance was depicted on her countenance. Could a word from her have caused Bath and its beneficent waters, together with its Mayor and Corporation, to be swallowed up in the earth, Sarah would have spoken it. But Anne was amused. The thing to her was a jest. Tyranny had made itself ridiculous, and its victim, wise in her generation, merely laughed, knowing that all the wit in Bath would enjoy the sport the Queen was making at the expense of her dignity.

While Anne was in the country the scandal of her relations with the Court was only a matter of gossip, but when she returned to town the bitterness of the feud was apparent to every eye. The Princess, instead of returning to the Cockpit, settled at Berkeley House, Piccadilly, being vouchsafed no more recognition by the State than if she were a private lady. Her guards, which had been withdrawn when she went to Sion House, had never been restored, a theme upon which the wags turned many a squib. One of these took the form of an imaginary mandate from the Lord Chamberlain to the bellman of Piccadilly, in which that worthy was commanded to abstain from paying the Princess "the ceremony" with which in his night walks he usually disturbed the repose of their Majesties' loyal subjects! Nor were thieves to be thwarted in

any attentions they might bestow on Berkeley House, for the Princess was neither to be "regarded by day nor guarded by night."

Amidst the warfare of Kensington Palace and Berkeley House there was one who had the freedom of both houses, one who in both enjoyed some measure of love. It was the little master of Campden House, William Duke of Gloucester.

Campden House was from 1690 the boy's permanent residence wherever his mother went. The place had been chosen for the sake of his health. But the relations of the Royal sisters, and the desire of both sides to keep the boy outside their quarrels, helped doubtless to influence an arrangement which removed him to neutral territory.

Almost from Gloucester's birth there was a tacit understanding that he belonged in part to King and Queen. When Anne returned to the Cockpit, soon after his birth, his nursery was established in the former apartments of Louise de Querouaille at Whitehall, which, as has been seen, were secured to Anne through the special intervention of the King. There the boy was nearer to the Queen than to his mother, and when, as often happened, the Royal ladies were indisposed to meet, the arrangement enabled them to visit the child without risking a disagreeable encounter.

The little Duke's nursery at Whitehall, together with the greater portion of the Palace, was destroyed by fire in 1691. At the time the boy was luckily not in residence there, as he was staying with his mother at Lord Craven's house at Kensington. But Queen Mary had a narrow escape of her life, being dragged from her bed half asleep into St. James's Park. From this time Kensington became the favourite residence of their Majesties, and Gloucester was established as their neighbour at Campden House. The air at Kensington suited him; but had William chosen another quarter for his London abode the salubrity of its air would, perhaps, have been found equally indispensable to the young Prince.

Gloucester's story belongs to the saddest annals of childhood. Born to bless the Princess Anne for a few brief years, he was suddenly snatched away, that after the light she might feel a thousand times more than ever the darkness. And when her boy was lost to her she had not even the solace of knowing that his short life was free from shadows. Doomed to an early grave from his birth, Prince George and the Princess thought to make him a model of Royal accomplishments. They would transform the delicate flower into an oak of the forest; and the flower bravely raised its head, as though it would flourish under the most pitiless hands. But the more bravely

it opened its tender petals to the roughest day, the surer was its fate ; and soon there was neither oak nor flower, only the tears of those who had misunderstood and were now disconsolate.

Anne had been so unfortunate with her other children that Gloucester, though a sturdy infant, was at first smiled upon with misgivings. Was he, too, tarrying but for a little while, to disappear when he had stolen all their hearts, leaving them poorer and sadder than ever ? The endearments lavished on him had in their pleasure something of apprehension. As the years rolled by, however, they began to think that Anne had in one of her children escaped the curse that seemed to wither her offspring in the very hour of nativity. If fear did not vanish altogether, it retreated at least to a distance, and around the boy revolved whatever was most charming in the life of the Court. The King was too much a warrior not to feel some interest in a little fellow who was a born soldier, full of spirit, and, though fragile, gifted with strange endurance.

William watched him less as a prince than as a cadet, who some day might lead battalions and charge with flying squadrons at roll of drum. He sometimes forgot that he was Anne's son, and that the blood of the despised George flowed in his veins. He built, perhaps, castles

in the air, as the roughest soldier will, and promised himself that, by-and-by, he would make such a warrior of this young tyrant that men would say "Orange drilled him well!" For the present the ladies might caress him. In his long clothes he was no better than a girl. Let his mother have him. But in a few years he would tear him from Her Highness's apron-strings, enlist him for a soldier, and breed in him the true temper of the camp.

Little Gloucester was carried over every day from Campden House to Kensington Palace to see his aunt, and this was the chief pleasure of the Queen, if pleasure there was in her life. Her husband came and went. England had proved but a poor prize to him, and little rest did he ever find in its fair domains. From hired generalissimo of the Empire he had suddenly become the peer of his old antagonist, Louis XIV But the sword was not for William merely an aid of fortune. It had in itself some magic that gave him happiness.

And so, instead of resting on his laurels, dreams as splendid, as aspiring, as impossible, as ever occupied the mind of the Grand Monarque, were his only refuge from the ennui of Royal state. But while her lord's mind ran on battles and the welding of new empires, in which perhaps William of Orange would find

himself at the head of a confederation extending from the North Sea to the Carpathians, his Consort could not fly for refuge to the battlefield.

Mary had not one of all her kindred to console her, had not one devoted friend whom she could trust. The man she loved with all her soul was indifferent, was worse than indifferent, was unfaithful. Her sister was her enemy, yet must she lavish her love on something. And there was only Gloucester to claim a part in the wealth of affection, in the reservoirs of tenderness, that, uncared for and despised, made half the childless woman's weight of misery. With spendthrift prodigality was the child's bid for love rewarded. And in return he was perhaps the only being who really loved Queen Mary.

Kensington Palace was a dull Court when the King was present, because he could never expand amongst Englishmen; duller when he was away, because then Mary was distracted with fear lest her policy should, by its success, make the King jealous, or by its failure anger him. The one bright spot in Royal Kensington was the nursery at Campden House, and brighter grew the light as the boy grew older and every day more a tyrant. For his tyranny the ladies adored him, and the men said, "Such spirit! Egad, his is the right Royal mettle! Devil a knee will he ever bend to Pope or people!"

To William they said the toy he loved best was a sword, and that he might not suffer in so worthy a taste through neglect of it, Campden House was turned into a sort of miniature arsenal. Cannon were mounted, wooden swords forged for baby fists were stored in the armouries, and toy muskets were stacked for a boy battalion.

On Easter day 1694 a revolution was effected at Campden House. The Duke of Gloucester donned for the first time male attire. Lady Fitzharding stood sentinel while the hero of England stepped into breeches. And a white camblet with silver loops and buttons completed the Royal toilet. The parents were enraptured, the ladies pestered His Highness with kisses. It was a day of jubilee for all the Court, save one, and he was the hero of the festival. A scowl was on the seigneur's brow. His lips were pouted. He was lamenting his old clothes, which were an easier fit than the new ones. This was a misfortune for the tailor, who was tried by court-martial and condemned to be punished by the urchins of the Duke's regiment. This regiment of "House Guards," as Gloucester called his companions, was the delight of the town.

If the bloods of the Court in the days of Charles were the terror of husbands, the baby-

swashbucklers of Campden House were now the terror of tradesmen and servants, who dare not cuff their nobilities on peril of losing their places. They had a review in Kensington Gardens, attended by the King, and there they marched and counter-marched, attacked and retreated, to the delight of their martinet-chief. His Majesty was enchanted. If only this precocious youngster with the passion for steel were his son, or at least, not Anne's brat, how loudly he would laugh where now he only smiled!

"Sir," said Gloucester, with a most comical assumption of the airs of a gallant, in acknowledging the Royal compliments showered on his forces, "I and my regiment will follow you to the war."

It was the finest joke William had heard since setting foot in this accursed England. He roared with laughter. At that moment he could almost forgive the Duke for having a mother. But the terrible Gloucester was not done. He turned to the Queen:

"My mamma once upon a time had guards as well as you," he said. "Why has she not got them now?"

At this allusion to the indignity inflicted upon the Lady of Berkeley House, the King and Queen and the ladies and gentlemen of the Royal circle were dumbfounded. His Majesty was the first

to recover his presence of mind, and his repartee was a soldier's. He presented the drummer with two guineas, presumably as a reward for the loyal fire which he put into his drumsticks at an awkward moment for his Sovereign. And the question remained unanswered why the Princess Anne, though next in the line of succession to the Throne, should be denied the military honours due to her rank.

Thus it would seem that almost the first thing which dawned upon Gloucester when he began to speculate in childish fashion upon the duty of kinship and the privileges of Royalty, was that his mother was out of favour at Court. He loved her dearly, and the question about her guards which he addressed to the Queen, emboldened by their Majesties' delight and laughter at his loyal display, was his first effort in her defence. It was an ideal opportunity for retracing his steps, had William but the grace to seize it. The public loved the boy, and an incident which presented him as a Prince of Peace would have delighted the country as a happy issue to his mother's troubles, and a still happier omen for his own future. But the occasion passed without any unbending on the King's part, and at Berkeley House it served no other purpose than to raise a laugh at His Majesty's expense.

Open enmity continued therefore, despite the bond which Gloucester formed between the two households. To the child it was all an exasperating puzzle. Why would not mamma walk over to the Palace with him? He would pledge his Royal word for her reception. He would pledge his oath, if mamma would pardon him for swearing, as of course he would have to swear by-and-by when he was a man. But Anne would not take his word; would not let him swear; would not make him the happiest little boy on earth, by doing this thing for him. Nor would Prince George escape his petitions. And George, no doubt, said, "It was not possible." There were certain large black bottles to be emptied. Duty first, duty always, was the Spartan way!

But another peacemaker than young Gloucester was hovering nigh to Kensington. The years wasted in strife were never to be effaced by the kindness of later days. Mary of Orange was only thirty-three when the disease which was in that day the scourge of Europe chose the greatest lady in the land as its victim. It passed by the hovels of the poor, the mansions of the grandees, Berkeley House itself, and in Kensington Palace small-pox struck down the Queen.

This was December of 1694. Christmas was at hand, but at Court the season was rather one of mourning than of joy, for William had come

back from Flanders disappointed with the fortune of war, and was grimly absorbed in new plans for retrieving his laurels when once again he should take the field.

On the frozen turf before the Palace the frost glistened under the winter sky. London, away in the distance, slept. All the Royal household at Kensington slept too, save the Queen. She had not retired. She was indisposed; and some strange spirit of prophecy visited her in her chamber, warning her that her days were numbered. At the whispered prophecy she did not smile, proud in the strength, the confidence of youth. She was at the age when one is still young enough to feel immortal. Why should she die? There were old men, old women, in the Palace, in the town. Why not one of them? She had only just begun to master the science of government. She might surely ask for thirty years more from the Lifegiver. But though the poison which was to destroy her had as yet hardly entered her veins, and though she had no notion of the disease which had settled upon her, Mary apparently foresaw her doom, and bowed to it.

Through that long winter's night the Queen spent the hours reading letters and documents, and feeding with them the fire burning in her cabinet. The blaze did not slacken. There was plenty to burn.

And then, when the flames held the secrets which she would not have us share, there was still one task between her and the bed from which she would never rise again. When her tongue would be for ever silent, and whilst still the softening influence of death pervaded the Palace, she would speak from her shroud to the King. In life he had been deaf to her pleading, marble to her devotion. Mayhap, when he stood alone on the Throne he owed to her, his soul would expand to behold what she had sacrificed to win his love. Sin! There was no sin when William had need of her. Love! There was no such thing of price to her save the Arctic warmth of his narrow soul. And for that feeble warmth, that pale, faint glow, she would sell all her kindred, had sold them, but never was she to know it for her very own.

The Queen's last letter to be read by the King after her death concerned, it is thought, Elizabeth Villiers, the woman who enjoyed that affection for which she would have exchanged the Crown of England. The doomed Queen's face grew stern as she wrote. The poison was stealing through her blood. The pen had a strange touch to her feverish fingers. Often she looked towards the door as though expecting it would open. Whom did she look for? Was it the King? Was it for the woman who

had for so long been the enemy of her peace? Was it for some visitor strayed from the world for which she was preparing so diligently? Though who that visitor should be she knew not, nor yet a reason for an envoy from the unknown. But her brain was on fire, peopling her cabinet with spectral faces, seen dimly through eyes buried in the caverns of other eyes, like the terrifying reflections of impalpable mirrors.

One can see her shudder. Perhaps it was only the chill which creeps over the fever-stricken like a mantle of ice that set her trembling in every nerve; and that neither the ghosts of fancy, nor aught that might be in the darksome corridors without, had power to dismay Mary. For none but a brave woman could thus prepare, as she was doing, for the eternal imprisonment of the tomb, which she saw wide open, yawning for her custody.

The whole secret of that last letter to the King, who had so grievously wronged her, exists only in that world where the thoughts born of human minds may have some immortal being. But no portrait remains of it in the shape of letter or ample tradition. Perhaps it contained a sublime forgiveness. Perhaps the patience of years failed her at the end, and that reproach, so long withheld in the hope of tardy reparation, flowed unchecked when death intruded to ensure

that the day of her lord's atonement would never dawn for her.

At Berkeley House that gossip was ever most liked which dealt unkindly with Mary. Amongst other things, they said that she consoled herself for William's coldness by loving Shrewsbury, the notorious "King of Hearts," who now was Prime Minister, and a Duke. But the tongues of the malicious and the thoughtless were suddenly hushed at the news that the young Queen was a victim of small-pox. It was not so much that all bitterness was allayed, as that all were subdued by fear at the presence of a deadly enemy, merciless in its rapacity, ruthless in its grim surprises, against which the youngest, the bravest, the highest, the greediest of life, possessed no charm.

Anne sent a lady to the Palace, begging the King's permission to visit her sister. But she had heard Mary's voice for the last time that day at Sion House, when the Queen, in the pride of glowing health, would bend the sick woman to her will. Anne's request was not granted. The Princess, perhaps, was not displeased that it should be so, for the dying woman was stricken with the disease in its most virulent form. To see her was to court death, and the mistress of Berkeley House was not resigned to die.

Too agonising to dwell upon was Mary's death. The unhappy creature, one mass of suppurating sores, was racked with such tortures as melted to pity the dour soldier-King so blunt of feeling. William moved his camp-bed to her chamber, and there he lay, silent, morose, thunderous, a grim sentinel at the threshold of eternity, until the sufferer passed the portals and he was alone.

## CHAPTER XXIII

THE death of Queen Mary was followed by tumult in many counties. With her had vanished whatever shadow of apology could be offered for William's sovereignty. He was a stranger in the land. What would England do?

Happily for William, the swift tragedy of Mary's death revealed Anne once more as the creature of ephemeral emotions. It revealed, too, the shallowness of the professions of repentance and loyalty she had conveyed to her father.

It filled her with alarm for the fortunes of her family, as represented, however, by herself, that the sceptre had passed altogether out of their hands, and that the House of Orange now ruled the land. In the absence of an alliance amongst the great families in favour of her father, the risings in the country were destined to failure, merely serving to clear away all doubts as to the security of William's Throne, and to increase uncertainty as to the identity of its next occupant.

In her perplexity Anne was guided, as ever,

by self-interest. The King might marry again, might succeed in altering the succession. Nothing would perhaps please him better than that she should retire into obscurity and permit him to hatch what schemes he pleased, without being obliged to consider her popularity with the people or the influence of her supporters in Parliament. But if the design of establishing an Orange dynasty in England—which could not fail to have entered his mind—was ever seriously entertained by William, Anne certainly never dreamt of obliterating herself to oblige His Majesty. On the contrary, the Princess went to Kensington House to offer her condolences, and the King received her with unexpected civility.

According to Lewis Jenkins, the faithful Welshman who has left behind so detailed a diary of the life of Gloucester, the Princess Anne was carried in a sedan chair from Campden House to Kensington Palace. She was at this time only thirty years old, but was already so completely a victim of gout that she had to be borne upstairs into the audience chamber.

When the Princess, in her mourning robes, entered the presence of the monarch to whom she had so long been a stranger, each, overcome by the pitiful tragedy but just enacted beneath that roof, burst into tears.

The emotion of these two people so antagonistic

by temperament suffuses with light some of the deepest springs of human feeling. Anne brought back to William's mind the years gone by, when he had taken from St. James's Palace a young and confiding girl, with mind unformed, and heart open to receive the impressions he would stamp thereon. And it had been the business of his life to harden that gentle heart, to uproot from it every kindly feeling implanted in her English home, to teach her to scorn her father, and to hate the sister who had so weakly lent herself to his ambitions. Mary and Anne were in early life linked by the tenderest of all ties, the memory of a mother idealised by the unquestioning love, the illimitable imagination of childhood. Only William himself knew what his share had been in destroying that gentle tie, and with it all the sweetness, and wisdom, and comprehension, the seedlings of which die somehow in the slaying of a pure, unselfish love. If William of Orange wept tears, it was for something at which a nobler man would have wept tears of blood.

It was William's kindness that unmanned the Princess. His roughness she could endure with equanimity ; she was schooled to it. But gentle words on the lips of "Calliban" dissolved her self-control. And in an access of self-pity for all she had suffered at his hands, and through

him at her sister's ; for all the sweetness of which he had plundered her life, her voice failed her, and she gave way to unrestrained grief.

The King and Princess were closeted together for almost an hour. And the first fruits of the newly established peace was the termination of Marlborough's disgrace. Not that the King had modified his opinion of the Earl. To the end he would despise the general who had deserted his colours in the field. But it was necessary to yield on this point to Anne. If when he had Mary's assistance, Anne had successfully resisted his dictation in this matter, she was little likely to surrender now. And if the Marlboroughs could not be got rid of, the only alternative was to make it their interest to support his Throne by restoring them to favour.

The period immediately following this reconciliation was the happiest Anne had known since the Revolution. Gloucester continued at Campden House, marching and counter-marching with his boy battalion, and fighting mimic battles, in which hard knocks were taken and given by the youthful bloods who, in the excitement of the fight, sometimes visited their Royal chief with his full share of scars.

These were, however, the lightest of his punishments. The boy did not grow stronger as the years rolled on. His mind developed rapidly.

He grew strangely precocious, as though nature, having set but a narrow span to his days, would make his life in some sort a complete miniature of the full term of manhood. He was but five when we saw him, mounted on his pony, leading his regiment past the King and then confounding His Majesty with pert curiosity. But his petted and pampered youth ended early.

Then came the storm and stress of his maturer years—storm and stress at six, when they tried to awaken the Royal spirit of a great King in a baby!

His father and mother put their wise heads together to evolve a system by which the delicate child could be made a lusty lad Own Prince of a race of sea-kings. The poor little fellow sometimes could not walk alone. It was part of his infirmity that at every step he feared to fall. The size of his head indicated a tendency to water on the brain. A healthy child of five requires careful watching and restraint, rather than any incentive to exercise. That Gloucester was afraid to take a step alone might have warned his parents that their child was in danger; that their chief concern ought to be not to prepare him for the Throne, but to save his life if salvation were possible.

Prince George was indignant that a son of his should be afraid of anything. One of his race

had never known fear. The boy should be made to overcome himself. Poor little Gloucester!

Behold him in the torture-chamber with the huge blustering Dane, and his mother, pale with grief and apprehension, but determined in her folly! The little Prince is ordered to march around the room alone.

"Oh, mamma, for a hand, just one hand . . . a finger just to touch mine, mamma!" was the petition so touchingly expressed by the girlish, trembling lips.

The Princess said she was sure he could walk if he would but try.

The child was silent. He thought it over. He was so anxious to be a real prince; to be afraid of nothing, like his father; to be ready to fight all the world, like his uncle the King. And, stiffening himself, he set out on his daring journey.

Oh! but for mamma's gentle hand . . . a finger even! The room was swimming round, ceiling and floor were meeting to crush him.

He stood stock-still, trembling with fear.

"Walk!" growled the Prince.

But he could not move. He could not speak. He was tongue-tied with agony at this terrible ordeal. And there was mamma's beautiful white hand. With it touching him, ever so lightly, he could walk anywhere, even up or downstairs.

Ah! what was that in the hand she withheld from him, something half-hidden in the folds of her dress? It was a birch. A birch for him, the boy who would one day be King of Britain! He did not know what they were saying now. His poor brain was in a whirl.

The Princess handed the rod to the Prince, and the giant laid it mercilessly across the little boy's shoulders. For a moment he was dazed. He seemed about to fall. But the gallant little spirit sustained him. He would be a king some day. He would be worthy of his brave papa, of his gallant uncle, the King. He had to suffer now to learn the Royal trade.

And Anne, one prays, turned away her face, and pressed her fingers upon her ears to shut out the barbarous spectacle. Swish! Swish! Swish! . . . The victory was gained. George of Denmark had won. . . . His little boy staggered across the floor, and never again would ask for a helping hand.

But dearly was the victory purchased. Gloucester had won his first battle, and inflicted on his mother her life's bitterest defeat. In making a man of him with the rod they were killing him.

The hardening process by which a delicate child was to be transformed into a seasoned veteran was not without its comedy. The boy,

during one of his frequent illnesses, received a present from Mrs. Buss, a member of his mother's household, which was deemed a gross outrage upon his dignity. It was a martial toy, representing Louis of Baden fighting the Turks. In the guard-room at Campden House the soldiery roared with laughter. Toys for their chief! They who fought like Mohawks amongst themselves and, 'sdeath, drew blood! They who entered the houses of gentle and simple between Kensington and London and took what they pleased, just as though they were let loose to live in an enemy's country!

Gloucester himself, colonel of the dare-devils, fumed at the slight put upon his honour. He ordered his fellows to arrest the messenger. The messenger had, however, fled, having got wind of the commotion. After him, beauties, or the Prince will himself out of bed and pursue the varlet to the ample skirts of the misguided Buss! If he resists, run him through! Spit him! And if Gloucester's Own once scent blood, Buss herself would do well to pray for that mercy in eternity which she need no more look for on earth.

The unfortunate messenger was caught, bound hand and foot, and water was thrown upon him until he was half drowned. Then, in plight as miserable as ever befell one who had set out to

do a kindly errand, he was taken before the sick Prince, who was pleased to approve of all that had been done. Honour was satisfied. Let Buss remember for the future her manners.

If she wanted satisfaction for what had happened, she knew where he might be found. The Duke of Gloucester was always at Campden House, and ready to draw upon any gentleman who might care to take up the quarrel.

All of which was very gratifying to George as evidence of the growth of a right martial spirit. The martial spirit was also manifested in a kindred fashion which induced the Princess, however, to fear that her son needed the curb rather than the spur. His Royal Highness found a little very mild swearing helpful in the management of his affairs. It put heart into the regiment when, worn out with war's alarms, sport flagged. It added many inches to his height when he visited the stables. Even his Shetland pony seemed to swell beneath him to the swift and splendid proportions of an Arab stallion as he led the cavalcade with a ringing expletive.

The Princess's reproofs may not have cured His Highness of a habit which, in his own judgment, so enormously enhanced his dignity; but they taught him discretion in his mother's presence, lest the retainers, who excelled in

language unfit for polite ears, might be dismissed for their services to his vocabulary.

The softer feelings which moved the King to civility towards Anne in the early days of his bereavement could not long sway such a nature as his. His temperament, his drinking habits, his cares, his feeble health, the brutalising influence of incessant war, always disappointing in its results, all forbade the hope that mellowing time and trial would ever alter William.

When the King was absent from England, as was the case for long periods, Anne enjoyed no political authority, but at such times she was the first personage in the realm. To the Princess this dignity was very sweet, nor was William's bearing on his return always of a nature to reconcile her to the change. When she attended his receptions during the winter of 1695 she was treated as the wife of an ordinary citizen.

An atonement, however, which more than compensated Anne for these slights was soon made by the King. His Majesty selected Gloucester for a vacant Garter. They dare not make him Prince of Wales. But a Garter was almost as good. No boy of six, save one born to be a king, could wear so proud a decoration.

At the installation ceremony he was worthy of his new manhood. He had learned the lesson of the birch. He was afraid of nothing. As the

Marquis of Normanby—the Earl of Mulgrave of her father's Court—said to Anne, he conducted himself as if thirty years had been added to his age. He was not even elated when the King buckled on the Garter with his own hands. He wore his Star as though he had Orders from all the Courts of the Continent in his dressing-case or somewhere.

Nor was this honour conferred on her son the only pleasure that William afforded Anne. She was given the use of St. James's Palace and of Windsor Castle, and Gloucester had all the cannon and soldiers that his warlike little heart could desire. Into a statesman and diplomatist he grew, as well as into a soldier. He was only seven when he made a speech to his parents on their birthday, wishing them "unity, peace, and concord," blessings which he naïvely prayed might remain with them, "not for a time, but for ever." When his devoted servant, Lewis Jenkins, praised him for turning so neat a compliment, the Prince administered a crushing rebuke:

"It was no compliment, Lewis; it was sincere."

The time was now at hand when William was to place on record an admirable example of the code of honour to which he subscribed. In September 1697 His Majesty and the King of

France entered into the peace of Ryswick. Louis recognised the Prince of Orange as King of England. But, as some compensation to the exiles at St. Germains, a secret article provided that the succession should be secured by William to the Prince of Wales, on the condition that James made no further attempt to regain the Throne by force of arms. There was also an understanding that Mary Beatrice should be paid her dower of fifty thousand a year, as stipulated in her marriage treaty, just as though her husband were really dead.

When the squadrons of France rode the tide, watching for a clear course to the English shore, and French troops mustered on the coast ready for the invasion of the island, King James and his Queen could only look forward to returning to their kingdom over her humbled flag, her routed forces. But now the hero of the Revolution was on their side. He who had driven them forth was pledged to make restitution to their son. It was no longer an affair of arms. Justice was to have a tardy triumph through diplomacy.

With spies passing constantly between the two countries, Anne must have received some vague hint that the peace of Ryswick had raised the drooping spirits of the band of exiles surrounding the Royal Family at St. Germains. But William

had in contemplation a scheme still more daring, a scheme which, after the lapse of centuries, fills one with amazement by reason of its reckless contempt for the likes or dislikes of the English. He offered to adopt the Prince of Wales.

The terms of William's offer, like so many other vital matters in these long decades of deceit and treachery, are somewhat uncertain. His original idea was doubtless to educate the Prince as a Protestant. But not for a thousand kingdoms would the Prince's parents hear of such a bargain. It is asserted, however, that William did not insist upon Protestantism, no small concession under any circumstances, but extraordinary in its generosity when made for the benefit of the babe who was supposed to have been smuggled into St. James's Palace in a warming pan!

England might have been made to ring with this proposal. But St. Germains was blind to the splendour of the opportunity created by its deadliest enemy for undoing all that he had done. Mary Beatrice was too loving a wife to be a good diplomatist. She thought only of her husband's wrongs, and, wedded to truth and justice, could not but believe in their ultimate triumph.

"I would rather," said Mary, when the project was communicated to her, "see my son dead at my feet than consent to his being a party to his father's injuries."

King James dare not fly in the face of such devotion. Perhaps he had not the strength of purpose necessary to do so. The woman who spoke thus had given him the truest love a wife could give, had travelled uncomplainingly with him the roughest road a young and delicately bred woman could travel. Years younger than her lord, she still placed him high above her children, great as was the affection with which she cherished them. She was not merely a Jacobite: she was a Queen enamoured of the King, and the man to her was greater than the cause. Yet who can unravel the motives of the purest heart? Mary Beatrice, in standing forth as the champion of her husband's rights, may not have been unmoved by fears for the life of the Prince of Wales, should he find himself alone in William's hands. Such fears might readily be pardoned a mother, for William's reputation for humanity did not rank high. But the Prince of Wales would have been as safe in London as in Paris. In Parliament, the Army, the Navy, his friends were numerous; in the Court itself they were influential. To receive the boy at all would have been to confess that grievous wrong had been done his father and mother in aspersing his birth. To injure him would have been a crime almost certain to invite swift vengeance. But the best guarantee of the

Prince's safety would have been found in the fact that William's first concern was his Throne, and that he cared little who should succeed him.

Mary Beatrice, in maintaining her husband's rights at the expense of her son's prospects, was unconsciously Anne's best ally. In a little while she had cause to repent her haste. Her dower, upon which she and the King had counted to relieve them from many embarrassments and aid the cause, remained unpaid. Parliament voted the money. But a farthing of it never escaped from His Majesty's custody to the unfortunate lady to whom it was due. It was a time when gold was the talisman which turned foes into friends; before it the most formidable gates swung open, and frowning ramparts crumbled to dust. Fifty thousand a year from the British Treasury was a source of strength which William would not willingly see pass into the hands of his enemies, in deference to any inconvenient law of justice. He was a law unto himself, and retained the money.

Anne likewise was an interested spectator of William's financial policy in regard to other people's money. Parliament voted another fifty thousand pounds a year for an establishment for the young Duke of Gloucester, the time having come for taking his education out of the hands of ladies, and entrusting it to preceptors whose

united wisdom might mould the weakling to the right Royal type. The King was allowed the fullest discretion as to the disbursement of the money, and he exercised it to such purpose that he saved about thirty-five thousand a year from the bounty of the country.

Marlborough, much to Anne's satisfaction, was appointed chief of Gloucester's new household. He was also included in the array of Lords Justices who governed the kingdom in the absence of the King. There is a story to the effect that when Marlborough attended Court to kiss hands on his promotion, His Majesty said: "Make the Duke of Gloucester like yourself, and I desire no more."

The King was perhaps indulging his taste for sarcasm at the expense of the silken Earl. He well knew that if Gloucester's new governor had been judged by the standard applied only recently to gentlemen of less importance, politics would have done with him for ever.

Scarcely had the dignity of a household of his own been conferred upon Gloucester when hope and disappointment again came to Anne. Again she was a mother, and once again the promise of new joy was turned to mourning. While Gloucester played with his juvenile guardsmen the new-born babe was taken away, and another was added to the array of tiny coffins where

slept the family of the Princess Anne. Gloucester alone remained, and his mother was more than ever the Bride of Death.

The preceptors of the hapless Gloucester spared neither themselves nor the boy in their zeal to make him, as they conceived it, worthy of the august destiny to which he was born. By orders of the Ministry, he was examined frequently, that Parliament might be assured it was receiving ample return for its money. His mother's friend, the Marquis of Normanby, on one occasion performed this duty, and seems to have reported that the boy was a prodigy of learning.

The accomplished cynic might have been better pleased had the Royal student betrayed more of boyish ignorance. The little fellow seems to have been a miniature James I., crammed full of abstract knowledge, with every prospect of growing into such a pedant as his great-grandfather. But times had changed sadly since the days of the second Charles. And if Normanby had not changed, that was sufficient reason why he should take the Prince and his culture as he found them, and, making the best of both, save himself the trouble of a quarrel with His Highness's preceptors.

Windsor was the boy's home from the time that he was given an establishment of his own,

and his parents spent their days between the Castle and St. James's, watching with pride and joy their boy's eager advance in all that became a Scion of the Blood.

The sun shone brightly on the Castle and lawns and woodlands for the eleventh birthday of the Princeling, who one day would be master of the hoary stronghold. His father and mother were there watching their son ride bravely along the line of his regiment of young dare-devils, sons of the noblest families in the land, and every one of them proud of this chief, only just eleven years old, who was able to fight and swear like an old war-dog of Flanders; and with his sword unbuckled argue with a bishop. The cannon boomed, the regiment cheered, the guards saluted; the Duke returned the compliment, tingling with pride, and dying to prove his mettle on a sterner field.

Anne's eyes were dim with joy. That palfrey pirouetting beneath its feather-weight rider carried her heaven! She wished it would stop its capering, and behave with less spirit and more sobriety. But Gloucester's nimble heel, daintily spurred, compelled a readier response than a mother's prayer.

The review was followed by a banquet. Gloucester had to do the honours, and if he was tired, and longed for rest, nobody knew. He

was a soldier, and his place was at the board to cheer the company come to do him honour. But glad was he when the day of rejoicing melted into twilight, and then into darkness. The fireworks shot gaily into the sky. His eyelids were heavy, but he watched them all, praised the master of the revels, jested with his companions, and to his anxious mother played the cavalier. But when William of Gloucester's head touched the pillow, weary though he was, sleep eluded him, and he wondered, perhaps, with great perplexity, if a prince's trade were worth the learning, and if those who taught it were always masters of the craft.

All through the years of his childhood Anne's last thoughts at night, her first on waking, were of her boy. As birthday after birthday came and went, and she might at last cast her thoughts forward but a few years to see him really grown to youth, she began to banish doubt, and her prayers that he might be spared to her were turned to prayers of gratitude that he had been spared. A few summers more and he would be a man.

While Gloucester lay awake pondering on the strange ways of a world where a prince must be birched into walking, though the effort kills him, and his head must be crammed with the dry-as-dust lore of word-spinning pedants, where he

must swear to please the soldiers, and pull a long face to please the prelates, neither did his mother sleep if she shared the mysterious, the weird gift, which is roused to activity only when danger overshadows a loved one.

The next day the boy was ill.

Message of dread import! Anne flew to his bedside. For years she had feared that summons. A hurried foot in the gallery was wont to set her heart leaping to her mouth lest it should be the dreaded call. Often had she listened in the hours of darkness for panic-stricken cries from the Duke's apartments; and if they did not come as she listened, a warning voice whispered that come the alarm would when she was most unready. Now it had come amidst the glories of Windsor.

Consternation was imprinted on every countenance. Was this the end? Was it for this the cannon had roared but yesterday, that the bells had rung, and the soldiers cheered their Prince?

The Windsor doctor arrived, and resorted to the cure for every ill. He bled the boy. Meanwhile Dr. Radcliffe was summoned from London. He was the first of his profession, and a high Tory, with little love for princes or princesses who owed their dignities to the Revolution. Radcliffe had recently offended Anne by declining to hasten to St. James's Palace when she imagined she needed his presence. "Tell Her Highness,"

said Radcliffe, "nothing ails her but the vapours." For this bluntness he lost his appointment as one of the Royal physicians, a punishment which Radcliffe's Toryism enabled him to endure with resignation. The call to Gloucester's side he could not, however, disobey. Humanity forbade it. Finding on his arrival, however, that the boy had already been bled, he declared that they had destroyed the Prince.

"You may finish him," he declared; "I will not prescribe."

Never did knowledge and skill utter words more cruel. On the great man's verdict the Princess hung as though he held in the hollow of his hand the life of her child, and that it was his to give or to withhold. If only he would take his place by the bedside and join in the battle for a priceless life! What matter that in the first assault of the enemy the citadel had been shaken! The last trenches remained for the grim defence of unyielding despair. But Radcliffe was hard as flint. He would do nothing, could do nothing. And he turned his back upon the Castle, now silent and grey and desolate, though the sun shone as brightly as when, a few hours before, the steel clashed above the ranks of Gloucester's Own, and banners fluttered bravely from every battlement.

Why did not Anne fall on her knees before

him and overcome him with her tears? Why did not the courtiers seize him by main force and impress him into the service of their dying master? But as though the tragedy were inevitable, they let him go, and Anne, convinced perhaps that the curse which haunted her house had at last found out her darling, and that escape from it was impossible, acquiesced.

Numbed with fear, the Princess watched by the bedside of the dying boy. Despair had seized her. She was beaten to the dust. Child had followed child to the tomb. Gloucester, too, would be there to receive the dust of his mother. She dared not pray for him. The strength to pray was not left her. The courtiers and ladies wondered at her calm, when they looked for a frenzy of grief and torrent of lamentation. But they did not understand. How could she grieve, how could she pray? To beg that this young life might be spared would be to ask Heaven to abet her plans for robbing her brother of his inheritance. She had heard of the vows of mediæval days when, in return for some favour, the suppliant promised a sacrifice to Heaven. Would she now give up her hopes of the Crown of England for herself and for this boy, if only he were spared to her? But even here, while death toyed with her son, she would not relent. She was subdued but unconquered.

From a mezzotint engraving by J. Smith, after a painting by Sir Godfrey Kneller.

WILLIAM, DUKE OF GLOUCESTER, K.G

p. 372.

For some days he lingered. Marlborough was summoned, but an enemy was in possession whom the great general could not dislodge, and he arrived only to behold the child-soldier's wild battle for life and his weary surrender. . . . Gloucester's breath came thick and short. His little bosom heaved with violent gasps. The sweet eyes that were his mother's heaven became dull and glazed, as the eyes of the soul turned towards another world. The cold sweat stood in beads upon the white brow his mother loved to kiss. A cry arose from the woman's bursting heart. He was slipping past her. Between him and her some strange, cold, unseen presence intervened . . . Idolised child, come back! Come back! The tomb is full of your kindred, while your mother is desolate! Perish the Crown! Perish the Kingdom! Perish honours, wealth, rank, favourites, pleasure, pride! Dear God above, but leave the woman her child!

But God was deaf. The white brow turned to marble. The eyes grew fixed. The gentle lips would speak no more precious tags of wisdom to make his mother smile. Anne might some day be Queen of England, but never a child of hers would bear the gallant name of Prince of Wales.

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